Interview with Ambassador Ronald D. Godard

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR RONALD D. GODARD

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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[Note: this interview was not edited by Ambassador Godard]

Q: Today is October 27, 2004. This is an interview with Ambassador, is it Ronald?

GODARD: Ronald, or Ron, I prefer Ron.

Q: And middle initial?

GODARD: D as in David, but it's Dwight.

Q: G-O with two Ds?

GODARD: One D in the middle.

Q: G-O-D-A-R-D. Ok. What does that mean in French, do you know?

GODARD: I think it's actually taken from German, and it means godly. Old name, it exists in German, English, and the French version is ours.

Q: And this is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stewart Kennedy. Let's begin. When and where were you born?

GODARD: I was born in Anadarko, Oklahoma, July the eighth, 1942.

Q: Better spell that.

GODARD: A-N-A-D-A-R-K-O. It's the name supposedly of an Indian princess.

Q: Where is that in Oklahoma?

GODARD: Central Oklahoma, just southwest of Oklahoma City and a big center of Indian reservations, and it's the site every year of a big powwow with various tribes. They have conferences, they have dances, show their handicrafts, that sort of thing. I was born there just by accident really. My dad is, or was, an oil field worker; he was a driller. They moved all over Oklahoma, and at that point there must have been some strikes in that area. He was in with a crew to work on a rig and I was born in a hospital there in Anadarko. We didn't live there very long, we moved on. Our base in Oklahoma during that period when I was just a baby and growing up was Wellston, Oklahoma. We built our home there.

Q: Where did the Godard side of the family come from?

GODARD: A distant relative of mine has traced us back to Patrick Henry County in Virginia. The Godards were small farmers. Patrick and Henry have now separated, there's now two counties. I'm not sure which one we're from, Patrick County or Henry County, but they were small farmers and they moved. It's an interesting example of the westward movement of the American people. They left Virginia and moved on to White County, Tennessee. They moved in a group of brothers, so there were lots of Godards in White County, Tennessee at one point. Then they moved on down to the northwestern corner of Arkansas, around a little village called Clifty, Arkansas. They were always small farmers, always looking for more free land they could claim.

Then, finally, they moved on to Oklahoma, in the same pattern. They moved from White County, Tennessee down to Arkansas, as a bunch of brothers. There's a large colony of Godards down there. The little cemetery in Clifty is just full of my ancestors. Several brothers, who were dirt farmers, then moved on to Lincoln County, Oklahoma; that's where my family home is. There's a little cemetery outside of Wellston called Rossville Cemetery, a short distance from where the two farms that my mother and my father's family grew up on. They were adjoining farms. My mother and father knew each other from childhood. Her family had immigrated from Mississippi.

Q: Did you know much about where they came from?

GODARD: Calhoun County, Mississippi but we haven't really done the genealogical work tracing it back. Maybe a two or three generations lived in Mississippi. The Godards seem to have been the experimental, adventurous kind. They were always part of that western expansion.

Q: Your mother and father knew each other from adjoining farms and all that. Given the times and the type of work, how much education did they have?

GODARD: I think Mother and Daddy both got through about the sixth grade. They married young and started having children. I'm from a family of four. My dad was caught up in the Depression of course, and it hit Oklahoma pretty hard as you know. Everybody went to California, a lot of folks did from our neighborhood in the Wellston area. But Daddy started working in the oil field at that point, had to leave the farm. He had leased a farm and had to abandon that. The Depression era went on into World War II. Dad was exempted from military service because the petroleum industry was a critical industry. He continued working hard his whole life until he finally retired. He was with the same company for some 40 years I think.

Q: Both hard work and rather dangerous work, too.

GODARD: That's right. He was very fortunate he didn't get injured, but he had many people who worked for him on his crew at various times that had pretty severe accidents.

Q: Again, you were born when?

GODARD: In 1942, just after the war broke out.

Q: What about as a kid growing up? I take it the Depression was the big thing that really affected the day wasn't it? The Depression was over but folk memory did last.

GODARD: Certainly it was alive in my father's memory and there were tough times for small farmers in that area. Daddy grew up in a family tradition of being staunch Republicans. This dates back to the abolition, to the period of the civil war when family tradition has it that some of my ancestors were actually strung up because they were abolitionists. There was sort of a blur of warfare going on in that Missouri, Arkansas area. It was really bloody. So Dad had that kind of Civil War impetus behind his politics and to wit the county they moved to in Oklahoma was Lincoln County. I don't think that was any accident. I think that may have stemmed from the people who settled there. It was a time when the Depression was very vivid for him. I remember his great antipathy, for instance, towards the Roosevelt administration.

He was a very proud man and one of the most humiliating things he ever had to do, at one point was to work on one of these WPA projects from the Works Progress Administration. That was really bitter for my father, because he'd always managed one way or the other. Theirs was not a pretty poor working class family, and that sort of thing. They were very independent people used to standing on their own two feet. Those impressions were part of my understanding and memories of not only the Depression era, but also of World War II, the Greatest Generation, the movies about the war and the heroism and defeating the Axis menace and that sort of thing.

Q: Did you grow up in Oklahoma more or less?

GODARD: For the most part. We moved around, as I said, all over Oklahoma, because my dad was transferred frequently. As he got older he needed to do something besides being a driller on a crew on an oil well. So the company, as I said he'd been with them many years, same company, Kerr-McGee, they transferred my father to the production department. He was sent out to Odessa, Texas. This was when I was in the ninth grade. Daddy was in charge of what's called a pumper. He was in charge of a number of producing wells, making sure the battery and tanks were at a certain level. Keeping them in good order. So from the ninth grade on I became a Texan instead of an Oklahoman and spent the rest of my life in Texas.

Q: Let's talk about the time you were in Oklahoma. What was it like growing up as a kid of a blue collar family in the post-war period?

GODARD: It was tough. We moved from a lot of little towns. There was one year where I went into about five different schools. Some of these were very short jobs. Distance was all over Oklahoma, a little bit of Kansas, and in parts of Texas, but mostly in Oklahoma during the boom back then. So my memory, up until we moved out to Odessa, is short intervals in schools. There were little country schools in many cases, where they had these tight knit little farm families. So, everybody takes a measure of you and I found myself having to just fight a little bit and getting in situations where, even though I'm a peaceful type, I had to stand up for myself. In each little town there were things that were redeeming about them. I always seemed to make a couple of good friends and so forth, and so it wasn't that we were shunned as transients or anything. It was just difficult being an outsider. I remember the pain of having to move again after you finally get yourself established. You're maybe looking forward to the next year, when you can go out for football and you can do the things you do as a youngster, in junior and high school, and in elementary school. But then you move, and you start all over again, building your relationships. There were always rural type communities, there was some sort of tie to the

land. Many of the people that I knew had connections with the soil in one way or the other when I was growing up. Mostly the only time we lived in a fairly large city was one short period we were in Oklahoma City. I didn't go to school when we were in Oklahoma City. It was just a summer period and other than that, we were in small towns all over Oklahoma.

Q: What about your church? Was there a unifying sort of church experience or not?

GODARD: Not really. Mother and Daddy both came from fundamentalist, I guess Baptist, probably, background, but neither one of them were church goers. They certainly were Christians and believers, but they didn't talk much about it and were not into organized religion in any way. However, I was sent to Sunday school. So, I remember that in each town I'd be dropped off or sent off if I could walk; I had to go to Sunday school.

My parents, with their limited education and social experience, were very shy people. They were very family oriented and had close ties to their families. Our little unit of six, my brother and two sisters and myself and my folks were very close, there wasn't much outside that for my parents except work. My dad was a popular fellow to work for in the oil business. He never had trouble recruiting a crew to take on a new job, but he wasn't into organizations at all. I don't remember a single organization. It was very tough on Daddy if I was playing football in junior high school and we had a dad's night. It was very tough for my dad to go to that sort of function, it wasn't the sort of thing that he was into.

Q: We'll move over to Odessa in a minute, but what about prior to that, what kind of education were you getting?

GODARD: Catch as catch can. I'd find myself coming into situations where it was stuff I'd already learned. Then there was stuff that was too advanced, I hadn't had the background. Somehow I missed Roman Numerals. I never learned the Roman Numerals. And there were other things like that. But somewhere along the line, as I moved around, I discovered a library, a community library. I forget which town it was; it might have been Sarah, Oklahoma, where I went down and I started reading. Growing up as a young man, and

partly because of my farm roots, I was absolutely enthralled with horses. I just had to have a horse, and I loved horses. I started reading, of all things, the Walter Farley books. I guess it must have been when I was in fifth or sixth grade I read all of them. I've now collected all of them.

Q: What were the Farley books?

GODARD: That's the Black Stallion series.

Q: Oh, the Black Stallion series. Because I think of people with dogs, all the Pace and Terhune.

GODARD: I was into that too. All these collie books. I liked dogs as well. I read lots of those, but My Friend Flicka, Thunderhead, all kinds of horse stories. And then the whole Black Stallion series, other books like that. Some guys got into detective stories and Hardy Boys, I was into horses.

Q: Did you ever get a horse?

GODARD: Nope, never did. That was a project. It was tough for me. The last place we lived in Oklahoma was Lindsay, Oklahoma, where I was very happy. My brother had also gone to school there, he had been a big football star there and I sort of followed in his footsteps and had a nice circle of friends. Then we moved again to Texas and my folks said, “We'll get you a horse when we get out there, maybe we can arrange to do that,” so I was a little more consoled by the move. But we never got around to getting me a horse; it's a pretty unpractical thing to do.

Q: How long were you in Odessa?

GODARD: This was ninth grade, I would have been what, 14?

Q: So basically Odessa took high school for you.

GODARD: That's right. I started out in junior high and then went on to high school.

Q: What was Odessa like in those days?

GODARD: Odessa's an oil town, not much of anything else. It's right out there in west Texas, right next to Midland, where the president grew up and where Laura Bush is from. Midland is kind of a white collar town and Odessa is sort of blue collar folks, folks who worked for the folks in Midland.

Q: My brother was an executive at an oil well surveying company called Schlumberger in Midland and he knew the Bushes and all that. My nephews played with the Bush kids.

GODARD: My wife has a very good friend to whose mother's kindergarten Laura Bush went when she was growing up. In fact, that's mentioned in Laura Bush's biography. While we were there, his father came originally to Odessa for a little while. Odessa is also the home of this movie Friday Night Lights that's playing in the theaters now. It's based on a book about the football team at Permian High School. Permian is the home of the Permian Panthers and they consistently had superb football teams, quadruple A division in Texas. I went to Odessa High School. Permian was a new high school that was created my senior year, they divided the student body of Odessa at that stage. Odessa had previously had pretty good football teams, but after that we never were quite the football power that Permian was. A reporter from the Philadelphia Inquirer came out to do a story about Texas football. It is a real obsession of folks who grow up out there. In Odessa they had built this professional football-type stadium. I forget how many people it held. Could it be 50,000? That's too many. But it is a huge stadium for their high school football team. The reporter did an expose. My wife and I recognized some of the names of people that he had talked to. My father-in-law who lived in Odessa during that period knew a lot of the people that he interviewed.

Q: By this time, what sort of education were you getting? What interests did you have in high school?

GODARD: History interested me. I discovered libraries. I also branched out and went beyond horses and into a lot of other things. I got very interested in history and particularly in English history; I also became an avid fan of biographies of the various monarchs of Europe. I did a great deal of reading. There was a very good library system in Odessa, and, early on, I plugged into that and checked out big stacks of books and read avidly. Then I guess it was in my junior year in high school that I had a history teacher, who was quite an amazing woman, Mary Jane Gentry. She took me under her wing and got me to join the history club at high school. I undertook some research at that point and wrote a paper on a local historical site. There was a big meteor crater right outside of Odessa. I wrote a little piece on that. I also wrote a piece on the history of the Monahan sand hills, which is a geological obstacle in the western migration; there's lots of Indian artifacts and wagon trains and whatever out there. Mary Jane took me to a national convention and to a state convention of the club, and I read a paper before the state convention in Austin, Texas. She had been an exchange teacher in England herself, and she discovered in me a student who knew a hell of a lot about the English monarchy, and she was very surprised. She really enjoyed talking to me about that, and she shared a lot of other books from her library with me. That set me on my course as I grew up in high school; I decided that what I wanted to do was to become a history teacher.

Q: I take it that around the dinner table at home there wasn't much of a discussion about world events and things of this nature.

GODARD: Not really. I was sort of an oddball in that way. I was very bookish, and very early had to explore outside my home to feed my intellectual interest. I was very fortunate in having a very loving mother and father, who would do anything for me and did anything for me and my future education; but, their interests were much different from mine. My older brother and sister were quite a bit older. My younger sister is only two years younger

than me, but my brother is 10 years older than I and my older sister 12 years older than I, so they were pretty much out of the house when I was entering into this stage of my life. But, I developed a circle of friends that had similar interests in Odessa. I did a lot of reading on my own..

Q: I think from all of this, if you look at it, an awful lot of your education essentially came from reading by yourself. How Texan did you become? Texas education is pretty nationalistic. Did you get very Texan about things?

GODARD: Oh yeah. I developed a pride in the state. One of the things I missed was Texas history. I got there right after you had to take Texas history, so I picked that up through my private reading a little bit. But, it is a state with a unique perspective. It's got a lot to offer in terms of what is contained within its boundaries, and we're quite proud of what we've accomplished over the years. I guess I didn't become a chauvinist; but, later on when I left Texas and ran into people from other parts of the country for the first time, I certainly wasn't shy about my origins, and was probably a little bit obnoxious about it.

Q: What about the outside world? You were in high school during the late '60s or so?

GODARD: I graduated from high school in 1960. It was the '50s.

Q: The Cold War was really beginning to crank up and kids were ducking under desks for nuclear drills and all that. Were you getting much about the Soviet Union, Europe, Asia and all that?

GODARD: I remember growing up with the fear of nuclear annihilation being a very real thing. I remember all these little schools doing the duck and hide exercises under your desk and so forth. Lots of folks were building bomb shelters in their backyards - that sort of thing. That wasn't too unusual in Oklahoma, because it's tornado alley. Many was the night when my dad would be on a night shift and my mother would be taking the children in the rain to a cellar somewhere by herself. That was a vivid memory of my childhood.

I remember worrying a lot at various stages about nuclear war. It was always sort of a dark cloud hanging over us. If everything else was going well, then what about nuclear annihilation. I very vaguely remember riding with my parents at night, I think we were going back to Wellston to visit some relatives, and over the radio was the news of Stalin's death. I was just a kid in the back seat, but I thought that was the opening of something wonderful and new for the future. Of course it didn't exactly pan out that way, but he had been sort of the personification of the threat to us. I didn't travel outside of Texas or Oklahoma when I was growing up. The first time I really left the area was when I went off for Peace Corps training after I got out of college. I took Spanish in both high school and junior college in Odessa. My first two years of college were junior college there. So Spanish was one way of introducing a little bit of the international dimension to my life, but I had a pretty insular upbringing.

Q: What about African Americans or Hispanics? Were they much of your universe or not?

GODARD: Not really. Growing up there was a sprinkling of Hispanics in my school. There were no African Americans in Odessa, and certainly not in Oklahoma. There were neither Hispanics nor African Americans. In none of the schools do I ever remember seeing a minority quite frankly. I didn't know many Catholics.

Q: Any Jews?

GODARD: There was one fella that was Jewish, whom I met in Odessa. But, pretty much everyone that I came into contact with while growing up were white Anglo-Saxon type Protestants.

Q: Were you exposed much to the media? I would think that local papers would not be filled with international news or anything like that.

GODARD: Our hometown paper in Odessa was so conservative that it was against public education. Odessa was the county seat of Ector County. You may remember, there was

a general who was drummed out while he was in Germany. General, Taylor I think. He was in the John Birch Society and was drummed out because he was indoctrinating the troops. Edwin Taylor came back and ran for governor, when he got back to Texas. Ector County was the only county he carried in the gubernatorial election. So it was very, very conservative environment. The newspaper, the Odessa American, was great for local news. I got my picture in the paper a couple of times for student activities. They actually published my article on the Monahan sand dunes.

Q: What were the politics?

GODARD: Very conservative, as I say.

Q: Was it conservative Democratic or conservative Republican?

GODARD: Back in those days, Texas was still pretty much universally a Conservative Democratic state. Republicans were sort of an oddity at that stage and everybody in office was pretty much a Democrat.

Q: Was TV making an impact? Walter Cronkite, was that something you watched?

GODARD: I did. Not regularly. We, of course, had a television like everybody else, but I don't remember as I was growing up at home, making a habit of watching the nightly news. I did read newspapers and I read the news in the newspapers, but I didn't rely on radio or television for information.

Q: Extracurricular activities at high school?

GODARD: The history book club. I played football up until my sophomore year, when I dropped it because I just wasn't interested anymore. I got into playing tennis, but not as a school activity. It was mainly the history club. Then, toward the end, I started working at the library as well. They got to know me so well that it seemed a natural progression to start working there. I worked there in the summers and then they wanted me to continue

during school, so I worked there after school. My junior and senior year I was already working part-time.

Q: You graduated in 1960. Where were you headed?

GODARD: We had limited funds, so I went on to Odessa College. It was a very good little liberal arts school. It's evolved a little bit now. They developed the vocational aspect a bit more. But, back then, it was quite a good liberal arts school. What I wanted to be, inspired by Mary Jane Gentry, was a history teacher. I was setting off to get a degree in history and eventually become a professor. That's what I wanted to do, at a university. But, in the meantime, I was going to teach high school because I didn't have any money. I knew it would take a long time. But then, I took a couple of education courses when I was in junior college and they turned me off so badly I just dropped it. I started taking more history and more English courses, and I did well at those. When I was a freshman was the first time I came to life academically. I was in the honor society both years, and did very well. I'd never been good in math or sciences particularly, but I excelled in biology. My teacher, whom I'd known from high school, moved up to teach in the college. She actually wanted me to go into medicine; but, I still had the history thing in mind, but not to teach in high school.

Q: What was it about the education courses that turned you off?

GODARD: A lot of theory didn't seem to have any practical application. They just seemed awfully theoretical. If they had dealt in children, the psychological process and learning and stuff like that, I probably would have gotten interested in it. But, back then, it just seemed that the courses were so airy and ungrounded in any practical application, I couldn't get a handle on it.

Q: Once you learn not to accept theories, it's a good way to become a real diplomat, right?

GODARD: So what I did was I knocked their socks off in English history. One of the questions that they asked in one of my courses, and this was a final exam, was, “Name all of the kings and queens of England from William the Conqueror to the present.” I had no problem with that. I knocked it out. So I did very well in those courses. I dropped the education completely. I decided to major in history at the University of Texas. In order to pay for my education I not only worked in the library, but in the summers my dad got me a job roustabouting with Kerr-McGee. So, summers, I roustabouted up in Sunray, Texas, which is northeast of Amarillo. I did that for four summers, all the way through college and made pretty good money for a kid, back in those days.

Q: Did the 1960 election between Kennedy and Nixon reach out to you at all? This was quite a significant thing for a lot of people.

GODARD: It was. I remember it as an important event, of course. But, in high school, I really wasn't that clued in on politics; the information was not that great. It was, as I say a very conservative place. Eventually, because of Lyndon, the state went Democratic - but not because of Ector County, I can tell you. It was pretty much Nixon country, that's what you heard. I don't know that I really made my mind up one way or the other about that election at that tender age.

Q: You went on to the University of Texas, Austin, in '63-'64? How did coming out of community college in Odessa and going into a really major academic institution that was known nationwide hit you?

GODARD: It was tougher. I wasn't in the honor society, but I did alright. I didn't have any trouble until I took trigonometry, which was one of the requirements. I didn't have that out of the way when I arrived, and I had trouble with that. Otherwise, I got As and Bs. I did well in the history courses, where I got As. In the history courses I was exposed to some really sharp people. I had a central European course with a guy from Harvard, who'd just come down. He was just wonderful. I also heard lectures by visiting professors. All this confirmed

my interest in history. I got somewhat interested in Latin America. Because I didn't have to worry about the education courses, I could do what I wanted to. Building on how well I'd done in biology, I even took for one of my electives, a pretty advanced genetics course. I really enjoyed UT (University of Texas), but it wasn't overwhelming academically. I knew how to read and study and, with a lot of hard work, I could catch up in those areas where I may have been deficient.

Q: What about the student body? Was this a different breed of cat than you were used to?

GODARD: Oh yeah, this was a whole different world than Ector County. I sort of went through different phases. I got out of Odessa as a great fan of Ayn Rand.

Q: I remember when it hit my college. This whole idea of self-absorption really struck a note.

GODARD: I was into that. Then I heard Upton Sinclair speak on campus and I became a socialist. It was a really wonderful broth of intellectual thoughts. The kids had all kinds of interesting ideas. This is back when Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) were quite active on campus. You could find everything from communists to national socialists on the University of Texas campus. It was sort of an island of more progressive thought in Texas. It really opened my mind.

Q: It remains so today.

GODARD: Yeah. It's a great campus. We were just back there a while back.

Q: What about things like the missile crisis and the death of Kennedy and other things?

GODARD: That really, really struck home. I guess I was in the dormitory at Simpkins Hall and a friend of mine, Bill McClanahan, came running down the hallway yelling and stuck his head in my room and said, “Ron, did you hear? The president's been shot, and the governor too.” And when he said, “the governor too,” that just sounded wrong. We went

down and watched television and it really was a very emotional time. I think after that I began thinking very seriously about the Peace Corps. The missile crisis - I remember that we all sat down in the lobby and clustered around the TV. We watched the president's speech and fretted about the rest of the nation in terms of whether the Russians would blink. We were all military age, thinking this might be it.

Q: How about ROTC? Were you involved in ROTC?

GODARD: No. I never got involved in ROTC. Toward the end of my undergraduate studies I signed up for officer's candidate school in the navy, and was accepted. I'd gone down and gotten my physical in Houston. They trucked us down. I also concurrently applied for the Peace Corps and I got my acceptance, otherwise I was going to be drafted. And I went into the two of them very carefully and finally opted, not because I was anti-war, but because the Peace Corps was a better fit.

Q: Well the war wasn't really that hot.

GODARD: This was 1964, it was a pretty big issue then.

[End Tape 1, Side 1]

Q: How did the Peace Corps work? I guess you signed up and said, “Hey fellows; here I am.” What happened then?

GODARD: Well, you indicate on the form what your background is and where you prefer to serve. I said that I had Spanish. I had it in college and high school as well, and I wanted to go to Latin America, that was my preference. They came back and offered me a slot in a program they were pulling together in Ecuador as a community development volunteer. I finally decided to accept that rather than going into the navy, much to my parents' chagrin. They didn't particularly want me to be a naval officer either, but they'd rather I stay at home and get a job as a librarian or something. I know my mother's dream for me was

that I would become a librarian. I continued to pay for school by working as a librarian; I continued working all through junior college and even at Austin in a library. Although, as I said, I worked as a roustabout in summers. But I decided to go into the Peace Corps and never regretted it.

Q: How were you received in the Peace Corps? How did the system work at that time? We're talking about 1964, right?

GODARD: That's right, 1964. At this time, Sargent Shriver I guess was still around. Jack Vaughn may have taken over by then. Lyndon was still President.

They flew me into Columbia, Missouri. My mother crying at the airport, sure that I was going off to my death and suffering. My folks really weren't the most sophisticated about the outside world, and the concept of going to a foreign country was just inconceivable. My father, who was very taciturn, didn't express that sort of thing, but my mother did.

So I got off the plane in Columbia, Missouri, where the University of Missouri is located. It is in the center of the state. We did our training there in the hottest place in the world. It was good preparation for the tropics, I must say, because it was one of those awful summers. We were in an unairconditioned nurses' dorm and I just remember spending night after night unable to sleep, because I was sweating.

This was my first exposure to people from other backgrounds. There were a couple of African Americans in my class; there was a wonderful Puerto Rican woman from New York; and, at least two other Hispanics in my group. This was a group of about 30 volunteers.

What was difficult was the 'selection out' that went on. In those days they were doing Rorschach tests and giving us this wonderful little exercise whereby you had to name the people you would not like to be on a desert island with. All of us did this and in the process

we were identifying those people in the group that for one reason or another were not so popular. They were interviewing us all the time; they had psychologists working with us.

The University of Missouri was chosen because it has a community development school there. Now this is community development in Missouri. What it was created for is helping local farm communities around there to advance themselves economically or improve infrastructure. I felt like I was back in education class. It was an awful lot of development theory. Of course, back in 1964, the theory in development was not that advanced, or so it seemed to me. And there was not a lot of down-to-earth practical application. Nobody knew what community development was and the volunteers were new at it anyway. And, whether bright-eyed, idealistic young people could go out and save the world was still to be proven. But they gave us some theoretical ideas about how we were supposed to approach it.

One thing they did during training was turn us loose on a rural community where we had to hitchhike to get there. We were given a little bit of money, but not much, to survive out there. So we had to rely on the good graces of the community. Some volunteers wound up sleeping in barns and stuff like that. My little group of volunteers actually found a little place we could rent. We then went around looking for good works that we could do and how we could contribute to the development of this community. I don't think we found a project to get involved in, but what we did do was an analysis of what the development needs of the community were by going door-to-door and talking to people.

Later on, when they sent me for Outward Bound training in Puerto Rico, they did the same sort of thing in a little village in Puerto Rico. There we found a little project with some nuns; we could help put together a basketball court. The really exciting thing about it was suddenly being exposed to this wonderful group of people with whom you're going through this psychological testing, and the physical aspects of the training, especially when we got to Puerto Rico, where we rappelled off of cliffs. They also had a water test where they

tied your hands behind you and tied your feet together and fed you in the water; you're supposed to be able to float to the surface and keep yourself alive.

Q: And those who didn't?

GODARD: Everybody made it. There was one guy who was a sinker. He did not have buoyancy in his body, and we nearly lost him one time. Later on he did drown in Ecuador. He was in the jungles of eastern Ecuador and got caught in a flash flood. He didn't make it.

But there was a lot of that type of training, and a lot of calisthenics early in the morning. This was in Puerto Rico at Camp Bradley. But the exciting thing about it was the other volunteers and meeting people from all over the country: a lot of them were from California, several others from Texas, mostly the Houston and Dallas area, and also people from New York.

Q: You all knew you were slated for Ecuador?

GODARD: Yes, we knew that before.

Q: About how many people were weeded out?

GODARD: About 50% of the class - very high. The thing is there were several couples where one or the other did not make it. What they were looking for was people who would have real trouble with culture shock. That seemed to be the main thing they were looking for. They were also looking for interpersonal skills, obviously; so that was the worst part of it. You get to know someone, and then all of a sudden, they're gone. So there was a high attrition rate, which was not a particularly pleasant process.

Q: This was early on, they wanted to make sure everything worked.

GODARD: That's right.

Q: I assume that you were told not to write disparaging postcards home.

GODARD: I don't remember anything like that.

Q: There was this very famous case very early on, when some young woman who was in the Peace Corps in one of the west African countries wrote a postcard home and it got into the major papers of the area.

GODARD: I remember that. But, we were so gung-ho and so out to help Ecuadorian people and that sort of thing, that in that group anyway, the motivation level was such that doing something embarrassing like that was unlikely, but it could have happened.

Q: I think that in the case I mentioned it was inadvertent. But anyway, what were you told about Ecuador, and how did Ecuador first hit you?

GODARD: We had some history as I recall. I served on the coast the whole time. However, most of the body of knowledge they had was about the Andean Indians. While that was the majority of the Ecuadorian poor people, there were an awful lot on the coast, as well. I was first sent to a place outside Guayaquil; then I served up on the Colombian border.

As I say, the theory we were taught in Missouri didn't fit. There were some things I recall, such as some sort of anthropology work that had been done on the nature of peasant societies that I found interesting and which furnished pretty practical insight on the workings of impoverished villages. However, it was not exactly applicable to the coast where I was. We had some Ecuadorians who were brought in to tell us about their country. None of that, of course, prepared me for a really underdeveloped society, as Ecuador was near the end of 1964. I'd grown up as a child of a working class family, but I'd never seen people begging in the streets like that. I'd never seen some of the diseases that you find

in their society or and malnourished children, and that sort of thing. So it was a pretty big shock.

Q: How did it work? Did they parachute you into the jungles of coastal Ecuador?

GODARD: To the contrary. On my first assignment, I was selected for a special position in the village where the workers probably had the highest standard of living in the country. I was in Ancon, Ecuador, which was, back in those days anyway, an oil camp run by Anglo Ecuatoriana, a British-Ecuadorian company. The workers were housed in barracks and company housing.

My job was to teach English. I had wonderful training in community development and was assigned to teach English. I organized my classes. The company had wanted to do this, and it was the chief way for them to teach their workers English which was pretty much necessary for them to rise in the hierarchy of this particular firm. I taught some basketball classes and worked, and that was about it. My time was pretty well taken up with the classes.

I stayed in the bachelor's dorm there, where I had a shower where you could get hot water with this flame thrower kind of heater apparatus. So I was living pretty well. In fact, I was very unhappy because that's not what I had anticipated doing. I was all fired up for helping the poor people of Ecuador, and now, here I was working with the cream of the crop, as far as the proletariat in this country was concerned. I actually discovered some sort of politics in this. Somebody, I don't know if it was at the embassy level or at the whatever, was very concerned about a guy there who had studied at Patrice Lumumba. What was the name?

Q: This is the University of Moscow.

GODARD: Right. He had been there to study and was back in as one of the labor leaders in the village; he was actually a friend of mine. I think they had wanted an American presence there as a counterweight for some reason.

Anyway, I asked for a transfer to an area where there were real development needs, and they gave it to me in spades. I went to the poorest part of Ecuador. I was sent up to Esmeraldas province, which is an impoverished province up in the northwestern corner of Ecuador, right on the coast again, right next to Colombia. In that village, interestingly enough, there was an African American population, descended from slaves dating back to when the Jesuits were allegedly bringing people in from Africa for plantation labor along the coast. This population was in the majority, although there was some sort of Mestizo population as well. I worked there my second year.

Q: Let's go to the first year. Was the language of the laborers Spanish? It wasn't an Indian dialect or anything?

GODARD: It was all Spanish. Same was true up in Esmeraldas.

Q: How did you find the oil workers?

GODARD: Very receptive. Anxious to learn English. Very apt students. I had books and I made up my own curriculum. I enjoyed that part. That's when I really learned that I did like teaching, and I enjoyed the interaction with the students. Also, we were always having little birthday parties for students and had little social events. So I saw a lot of them socially. I became very close to the family of one of my students and I was sort of adopted into that family, and saw a lot of them. So it was a very pleasant experience and I enjoyed it. It was not a hostile environment at all. There was also an American engineer and his family, when he discovered there was a local Peace Corps volunteer, I occasionally got invited to their place.

Q: What was your impression of employer/employee relations there?

GODARD: It was not a hostile time. I think they had signed a labor contract before I got there, so they weren't in intense negotiations or anything. I think the company was to a certain extent one of these sorts of benevolent types, if you will, because they had the best

benefits in the country. Everyone felt very pleased to have a job with Anglo-Ecuatoriana in Ecuador in those days. I remember that most of the hierarchy was Ecuadorian, not British. There was some British element there, but it was very small.

Q: Get any feel for the Ecuadorian government in action out there?

GODARD: It was so removed. In fact, while I was in Esmeraldas there was a coup and I didn't hear about it until a week later. I knew the central government was there, but what I heard about was local politics on the coast. There's this division in Ecuadorian society of the coste#os and the serranos. The regional aspect of the serranos run everything and sort of who wants to know anything about them anyway, because they are all a bunch of serranos in the government and we have a governor here in this province, a local mayor and that sort of thing and everyone just pays attention to them. There were no health clinics that I was aware of. There was no real government presence. Esmeraldas was, to a certain degree, almost a missionary area, which had some agricultural extension, but the government presence was very minimal.

Q: You moved up to this northern place. What was the village like?

GODARD: There was a town; it was very tropical. I lived in a thatched hut. Back then it was an area that produced a lot of tropical goods for export. Mahogany-type wood and that sort of thing. There was a little port and there would be these strange little ships that would come in to pick up these big logs. I remember one time a Greek ship came in with Greeks and other nationalities on board. They were there for several days to load, and sort of took over one of the little cantinas there. They brought their own records; and I'd go there and watch them dance; it was like Zorba the Greek. It was a very interesting cultural experience. All kinds of strange people came to there.

It was kind of the end of the world; there were no roads in. There was a railroad. I recall they had a kind of a truck on rails that came in and brought passengers every other day.

There was a train once a week. And there was a military base there, a naval base on the outskirts of town, because it was right on the border with Colombia.

The people, extraordinarily poor, living in grass-thatched huts. I replaced two other volunteers who had been there. They'd just transferred out. Carried on with their work, with a youth club that was a football team. And we had regular meetings, organized projects. Tried to get something started with the agricultural cooperative. That didn't quite ever get off the ground. But I brought a lot of baby chicks down through the Heifer Project, and one problem was lack of protein in their diet. There was fishing there, but not enough of it. They didn't eat as much fish as they should. But they did raise chickens, and so I was trying to upgrade the quality of the chicken. I didn't know anything about chickens until I came into Peace Corps. But I put out a lot of chickens that I brought down. Then followed up with families that took them on and trying to get them to keep them around to go into egg production, but very often they wound up in a pot before they reached that stage.

Q: I imagine your Spanish really developed in this.

GODARD: Yeah, I thought my Spanish was pretty good until I came into the Foreign Service. It was certainly more than adequate for dealing with people at the village level, and certainly adequate for explaining, teaching English class, and I did some English teaching while I was in San Lorenzo. There was great demand for that. In my group, some people were quite surprised at how well I could manage on streets. Others had more trouble than I did.

Q: Were there any problems with Colombia at the time?

GODARD: No. There were no border issues. It was the very poorest border, and I made a couple of trips into Colombia on the border. I went to Tumaco, was the Colombian town on the other side of the border. I shouldn't have done it, I didn't have permission, but I had an outboard motor. That was the only way you got around down there, by boat, and I took a couple friends with me and we went out to Tumaco and hopped around a little while.

And then later on, I took vacation and really went into Colombia. Went down to Cali. This is before the drug problem, I'm sure there was some elements of it, but it hadn't become a huge issue at that point. Colombia has had such a violent internal history, but I don't remember this. I look back and remember the history. I don't think this was a period when the violencia, for instance, when the conservatives and liberals were killing each other. I don't think this was a period when that was going on extensively. It seemed to be a fairly tranquil time.

Q: Did you have any contact with the embassy in Quito, or the consul general in Guayaquil?

GODARD: At the embassy, I remember briefing at least once. We had a Peace Corps conference where we pulled volunteers together and we had a briefing, somebody from the political section came down. All I remember is a pink, portly little guy who didn't impress me very much. Then there was a Foreign Service officer who visited me in my post in San Lorenzo. He was sort of an adventurous type. He was from the political section, and he did impress me. And we talked a little bit about his work. I got interested in the Foreign Service way back in high school when a friend of mine had gone to Bowie State, and part of the Bowie State program was visiting various federal agencies, finding out what they do, and he'd been particularly impressed by what he heard about the Foreign Service. He was telling me about this and I thought, gee, that sounds pretty cool. I sort of filed that away and maybe that's what I had in mind when I went into the Peace Corps. I don't remember being quite determined at that stage, but I may have already had it mind. But it reconfirmed when I met this Foreign Service officer in Ecuador, and talked to him a little bit on what sort of things he did. I didn't have a clear concept of what Foreign Service officers really do. Not until I started my first job.

Q: It was a two year assignment wasn't it?

GODARD: That's correct.

Q: So it would be sixty...

GODARD: '64 to '66.

Q: '64 to '66. What happened then when you left?

GODARD: Planning ahead, I determined that I did want to go into Foreign Service, and I felt the best way to prepare for that would be to go back to graduate school and get a master's in Latin American studies. I found that I really enjoyed working in the Latin culture. I felt I could be an agent for change. I could be somewhat influential. Anyway, I wanted to keep on doing that, working overseas and particularly in Latin America. I applied for graduate school, back again at the University of Texas. In those days Columbia was another school that was pretty good in Latin American studies, but the University of Texas was as good as there was around it seemed like, and so I decided to go there. I had a little bit of money. Peace Corps gave you a stipend, socked away about 100 dollars a month. So I had some money and my dad borrowed some money to help me go back to school too. So I went back. I was a graduate student and wanted to get my master's very quickly. I took a full load and I managed to finish it in a year and one summer.

Q: Coming back, it'd been now two years. Did you find things had really changed from the campus and we're talking about protests and other things like this? Must have been a different world.

GODARD: It was. Very politicized. I wasn't getting as involved in it as I might have because this is also when I met my wife and fell in love and was courting her. It took up a lot of my time.

Q: They tend to do that.

GODARD: But I didn't become involved in the anti-war movement. It would have been my inclination I think, but I stayed out of that. During the Peace Corps time I was exposed

to all these folks from New York, California and whatever who were real, you know, we sang “Who Shall Overcome” when we rode on the bus and went to do our Outward Bound. We went to the Lake of the Ozarks I remember, traveling through Missouri down into southern Missouri singing “We Shall Overcome”. So I was radicalized perhaps to a certain extent. But when I got back to the University of Texas I had my nose pretty much to the grindstone, got some fascinating courses, I really enjoyed my studies, and of course I met my wife too.

Q: What is the background of your wife?

GODARD: My wife is also from Odessa, Texas. I did not know her while I was there. She is the same age as my sister. They were in classes together and knew each other, but we had never met when I was in Odessa. She was also a prot#g#e of this teacher I told you about, Mary Jane Gentry. And Mary Jane had told Leslie Ann about me. Leslie Ann was interested in the Peace Corps. So she thought that she should get together with me at some point to learn about the Peace Corps. So I met her, talked her out of the Peace Corps and talked her into marrying me. It was sort of a natural fit. Leslie Ann, in addition to sharing this same idealistic view that would lead you into the Peace Corps, was with the same church I was. We were both Episcopalians. I broke with mine. I told you I'd been sent to Baptist Sunday schools but somewhere in high school or junior college, became an Episcopalian.

Q: What brought that about?

GODARD: I don't know. I was always serious about religion and did a lot of reading, and I think in part it may have been my sort of anglophile interest in history.

Q: You were saying you could name the kings of England.

GODARD: I think it may have been partially that. Anyway, I approached it seriously and I converted to Episcopalianism. I'd been baptized as a Baptist but I'd never really been active in it except for Sunday school.

Anyway, Leslie Ann, we went to the same church. Never met her there either. Shared many of the same interests, certainly an interest in history. She was into the Byzantine history. So it clicked very much, and we were married after having known each other for one semester.

Q: You were working on Latin American studies mainly. Was there a thrust to the teaching there? I'm thinking about liberation theology and other things that were going on. At that time, Latin America was pretty well on the lands of repressive, non-democratic governments and all that. What were you getting from the teaching?

GODARD: It was sort of a mixed bag. Latin American studies in those days borrowed professors from various disciplines. There was one in the business school who seemed pretty conservative to me, and his approach was very down to earth. He sort of stayed out of politics. I had an economics professor who was pretty out there at times as far as being a radical kind of ideologue about social reform and so forth. But there was a mixed bag. A lot of serious research. There were a couple who were Brazilian experts, and at that time their military was very big. I think there might have been a coup in '63, is that right? Around there, anyway. So they were critical, certainly critical. The ideas about human rights playing a really big role in foreign policy, were still in foreign relation. They weren't being spouted to us I don't think from class. Just a lot of criticism, implicit or explicit, of U.S. policy in terms of supporting unquestionably military dictatorships. So I heard a lot of that.

Q: Were you getting much about Vietnam while you were there?

GODARD: No. It was in the background, going on when I was in graduate school. But from my teachers, no, I can't remember any of them taking a position one way or the other. There were petitions and various groups on campus who were very active in the anti-war movement.

Q: Was there a Marxist academic community?

GODARD: In Austin? Oh yeah, sure. There were socialists anyway and small, not mainline, but they would have their tables set up with Stalin, trying to enlist members.

Q: Did you find yourself concentrating on any particular area of Latin America?

GODARD: As I mentioned, a couple of my professors were big on Brazil and so I did a lot of reading on Brazil. Mexico was an area that I was quite interested in as well. I tried as much as I could to focus on the southern continent, I was really interested in Argentina. And for some reason, from way, way back I'd been interested in Bolivia, and I'd done a lot of reading about that. On my thesis I did a little. One of the papers that I put together in my thesis was on Bolivia.

Q: Well then that's two years for your master's, or one year?

GODARD: Year and a summer.

Q: Year and summer. This will take us to '67. Then what?

GODARD: I guess it was in April, I had taken the Foreign Service exam. But it took a long time to hear back. I'd gone ahead with my plans to get married and I don't know what I would have done if I hadn't gone into the Foreign Service, because I had Peace Corps experience and I had a master's in Latin American studies, and then I had a BA in European history. Back in those days I just don't know what I would have done. There was no plan B. But it worked out. I passed the exam. I don't know if that was because Lyndon

Johnson was President and the University of Texas was where Lynda Bird went to school. In fact, she was in my graduating class. Whether we were particularly taking Texans that year, but anyway, I passed the exam and had no trouble with the oral.

Q: Do you recall any of the questions on the oral?

GODARD: One question I remember was I told them I liked impressionist art. They asked me about that. They asked me some sort of cultural question, and French impressionism I said was the kind of art I liked. They asked me which particular artist and I can't remember who I said, probably Cezanne or something like that. Back then, I didn't know anything about impressionism. That's what I'd seen in books. I had not been to Washington and seen the real thing. That's one of the first things I did, was go to the national museum. But beyond that it seemed like there was an inbox exercise that we did during the oral exam.

Q: Well then, did you get your call to come into the Foreign Service.

GODARD: I got a letter inviting me to join an A100 class or whatever it was. And I got letters from my congressman and senators. My wife and I packed up and set off for Washington. Packed our own household effects. From the wedding we had new china and everything. Much of which was broken in transit because we didn't know how to pack. We arrived in Washington in September of '67.

Q: So you entered the Foreign Service in September of '67?

GODARD: That's right.

Q: What was your A100 course like, the composition and people?

GODARD: From all over the country. This was a class that was very much under the influence of the Vietnam period. We had people from Berkeley who had gone through some pretty strong experiences out there. We had one guy who, this is when everybody who was single was sent to the CORDS (Civil Operations and Rural Development

Support) Program in Vietnam. Being married, I wasn't chosen for that. There was one fellow who had refused to go and he was sent to another place. They actually accommodated him. But all bright, interesting people. We pretty early on made friends with several folks. One of them even was in my retirement seminar. We were the last two in our class to retire. He was an ambassador in Eritrea.

Q: Who was this?

GODARD: Donald McConnell. We were good friends during that period and of course went off to different parts of the world, almost never saw each other until we retired. I did run into him again before I went on my last assignment.

[Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

Q: How did you find the A100 course, and Washington? You'd already been in the Peace Corps and all, but this is in a way, I guess, your first sort of glimpse of the center of the American government wasn't it?

GODARD: Oh yeah, it was mind boggling for us, or at least for me. My wife had been around a little more than I had. But I loved the museums, I couldn't get enough of that. It was tough getting around when we first got there, we had to learn how to use buses, and we found a little place in the northern part of Alexandria. It was kind of a tough commute, you had to take two different buses to get to Rosslyn where the A100 course was held. We just spent an awful lot of time looking at stuff in Washington, all the monuments and going to museums. Both my wife and I enjoy that. And I was particularly taken with the Capitol building and spent a lot of time roaming around looking at that. Rosslyn was kind of a disappointment. I don't know if that's exactly what I had expected as a training site.

Q: Was this when you were in the garage?

GODARD: It was a high rise where you had the elevators that you had to wait for.

Q: Pretty crummy.

GODARD: Not too classy actually. But bright, stimulating people in our class from all over the country and we really enjoyed them. Found it kind of intimidating, but I seemed to fit in. The Vietnam War was overshadowing things. At one point one of the exercises we did in our A100 class was do a draft cable reporting on a newspaper article. You were playing the role of the French diplomat reporting on a speech by Hubert Humphrey on the Vietnam War. I really got into it playacting and I just tore Hubert Humphrey to pieces in my little reporting cable. That was taken as beyond the pale. My instructor, I think it was, held up as an example of what not to do. So I learned to sort of curb some instincts. You don't playact too realistically.

It was useful instruction I think, for the most part. It's better now, I believe. I spent a year recruiting people for the Foreign Service as a Diplomat-in-Residence and I know that what we had to offer the incoming group was much more practical and useful to them. The consular training, in particular, was cursory because we were going out as consular officers, and that was not enough for me to really do the job. Fortunately I had good trainers where I went. The A100 class had all this drama, when they gave you your assignment. I thought the people who conducted the course were well-qualified. One of them in fact was Fred Chapin. I came across him later on and he was our ambassador in Guatemala at one stage. So very good, qualified people.

Q: How did you say the FSI looked a little bit askance at your Spanish? Was the accent wrong or was it...

GODARD: Well, it was street Spanish. It was real good for a Peace Corps volunteer, but it wasn't parlor Spanish. So I had to take Spanish training to change the accent a little bit and give me some vocabulary that was a little more useful.

Q: We'll stop about this point, but let's put at the end of the tape, what'd you ask for, what'd you get?

GODARD: I wanted to go to Latin America, and I got Latin America. My first assignment was to Panama City, Panama.

Q: Of course, this is almost non-Spanish speaking, isn't it practically?

GODARD: You could survive in Panama with just English, but it's Spanish speaking. I was in Panama City for one year and then I was sent up to David, Panama, which is way up on the border with Costa Rica, and there it was all Spanish.

Q: So you went out about '68?

GODARD: Yeah, '68.

Q: Ok, well we'll pick this up for the next time and you're off to your first post in Panama and you're going to Panama City.

Today is the twelfth of November, 2004. You were in Panama from '68 to when?

GODARD: '70.

Q: What were you doing there?

GODARD: I was initially a rotational officer and was assigned to the consular section. I was a non-immigrant visa officer adjudicating visas essentially, and I remember the staff, still remember some of them. Very qualified people, the FSN staff that I worked with. I was a green junior officer on his first assignment. These were people that had worked in the embassy for years and years, knew backwards and forwards what we were supposed to doing.

Q: You'd point, say you sign there and do this.

GODARD: Still, I had to do the interviews and it was an interesting assignment as it turns out. One thing was I was interviewing prostitutes for one thing, that you had to watch for coming out of Panama.

Q: Well I assume there was a substantial number who were plying their trade there.

GODARD: Right. I had an interesting case when I first was exposed to the prohibitions against those citizens who had been involved in subversive organizations of one kind or another. Of course in Panama there's all kinds of left-wing politics. Got involved with a case that was very complicated. The most interesting thing I did as a consular officer was issue a visa to the president. When I got there, Marco Robles was just finishing up his administration as president of Panama. And he had very carefully prepared the way and gotten his immigrant visa to the United States to go up to Boca Raton I think it was, in Florida, to be director of a bank. He had prepared his exile. And so I was dispatched over to the presidential palace, they call it the Palacio de las Garzas. They have these cranes that are in a roundabout. I issued a visa, fingerprinted he president and his wife, and they had a little girl as well going. I did all the paperwork for his visas so as soon as inauguration day come he'd be on a plane off to Miami into exile. And that's when Arnulfo Arias came into office. Arnulfo Arias was a famous Latin American politician who had been president I think by that time, a couple of times before, then thrown out by the military both times, and was coming back again to be president. This time, after we'd gone through this gala inauguration, I was control officer for the politician from California, Jess Unruh.

Q: He was Speaker of the House, but he was Mr. Politician par excellence.

GODARD: I was his control officer. He came down for some reason for the inauguration of Arnulfo Arias. I guess they'd been friends at some stage or another. And so we went to this gala inauguration, and Arnulfo Arias lasted 11 days and was thrown out by the military.

They had a military coup and I went through all that, the roadblocks and so forth. Those were the most interesting parts, I think, of my tour as consular officer. But it gave me a good grounding I think in what consular work was all about.

Q: Let's talk about a bit as you saw, what was the political situation when you arrived there?

GODARD: When I arrived in Central America, obviously it was tenuous. Panama had a democratically elected government, but it was the only country in Central America besides Costa Rica that did have. They were all military governments throughout the isthmus. Then, of course, Arnulfo Arias was overthrown and the military took over there too. It was a poor country. My wife and I got very involved. Panama was a tough place because of the strained relationship over the canal zone. There'd been riots in the past, so bad in '64 that rioters sacked our consulate over in Colon, Panama, and we closed it. And so it was always sort of an undercurrent of anti-Americanism in Panama. I remember we were near a university and students came over and threw rocks at the embassy every once in a while. It seemed like every weekend.

We made an effort, my wife and I, to try to reach out. We both taught English classes at the binational center. It's one way to meet average citizens in Panama. But it was not easy. It was a good life for us though. We'd come out of college living in an old army barracks for married students' housing at the University of Texas. In Panama City we had what we thought was a palatial apartment, three bedroom apartment for two of us in a very nice apartment building. Actually, it was an apartment over a private residence, and it was owned by a politician there. A guy who was a member of the Chinese ethnic community in Panama who was a deputy back in those days, a member of their national assembly. An interesting time, and I think a good introduction to the Foreign Service. I had a superb boss, George Berkeley who was the consul back in those days. He spent a lot of time with me teaching me my trade, and his wife, Melissa Berkeley, was just marvelous as well. They sort of adopted us and taught us the ropes. I was very much tied up on that first

tour in particular with the Peace Corps as well. We stayed in touch with volunteers, in fact we had a lot of volunteers who stayed with us at the house when they were in town, and we knew the Peace Corps director, and the deputy director we stayed in touch with for years and years after that. So we had that connection when we were in Panama. And then you had all those movies in the canal zone. There were all these bases, and there were movies that you could go to for 50 cents and five cents, and going over to the canal zone, having a hamburger and going to a movie in the evening was a great thing to do.

We didn't travel a heck of a lot during that first year while in Panama City. Then I was transferred up to David, Panama. David is a lot like Texas, really. It's the cattle producing part of the country. A lot of ranches up there. It's also where Boquete is located. Boquete is in Volcan which is now very much more developed than they were then, but they were sort of the retreats up in the mountains, the resorts up in the mountains where people went to in Panama. Now even more so I think. There was a big fair in Chiriqui province, where David is located up in that northern part of the country. And the ambassador came to visit us, and we arranged a place for him to stay. Not up to ambassadorial standards. They didn't have any hot water in this little cabin we arranged. They had asked me to make the arrangements a little late in the game. All the good stuff was all gone, so it was only because I had friends up there that were willing to give up their vacation house. They didn't have anything for him. He came up for the Chiriqui fair.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

GODARD: Robert Sayre, who I had a lot of contact with later on. I had two ambassadors while I was there. Chuck Adair, Charles Adair, whose son later on, Marshall Adair, became a Foreign Service officer. But he and Bob Sayre changed positions. They just switched them. Adair went to Uruguay and Robert Sayre came to Panama. This is during the last half of my tour. Sayre was the ambassador.

Q: Did you have much contact or get involved with the Zonians I guess you called them, and the Panamanians, that longstanding strained relationship?

GODARD: You came across them all the time. None stand out as particularly close friends. There was sort of a different culture there. We hear a lot about the Zonians as never setting foot in Panama, the Republic of Panama, and some of those people certainly existed. But there were an awful lot of Americans who had become culturally Panamanian as much as American. I mean they had married Panamanians and their children were growing up in the zone. So it was sort of a cross-cultural environment too I think. I didn't come across any of the Panama haters. It seems like I remember meeting one guy who boasted that he had never been in the Republic of Panama, which seems pretty extraordinary, but there was some awful nice stuff over there. Laid out, all the military bases, the Tibali house was a great place to go eat right there on the border on John F. Kennedy Boulevard. It was an interesting city. Lots of interesting people there.

Q: How about in David. Was this a different mindset? People there, were they different?

GODARD: The Panamanians themselves? I always felt that you scratch a Panamanian and you'd find a core of anti-Americanism with the resentment that built up over our presence there. I certainly left there with the conviction that it was a bone in the throat of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America. Not only was our treaty of indefinite possession of that zone resented deeply by Panamanians, but other Latins had picked that up as part of a litany of complaints against the United States. So I was quite pleased when we were finally able to negotiate an agreement to get ourselves out of that predicament. It just removed a very difficult obstacle to normal relations I think.

Q: How about American military? Was that part of the unhappiness for the presence there?

GODARD: Of course that was part of the package, the presence there and the bases. That was part of the complaint against our presence in the canal zone. But I think it's a love-hate relationship. I say scratch a Panamanian you'll find anti-Americanism, but superficially they were wonderfully open and accessible, seemed to admire the United States. They were certainly a society, at least the elite, where they spent a lot of time in the United States, were educated in the United States, were certainly culturally, played baseball and all that sort of thing. But the military when I was there were at pains to minimize the friction with the populace I think. There were no incidents that I recall. You know, inevitably there were problems with service men getting in fights, those were the sort of things that you always had when you have bases overseas. But Panama City depended so much economically on the income derived from the presence of the bases there that I think they could overlook a lot because of that.

Q: You mentioned leftist organizations. This was the height of the Cold War. Were there groups that were Cuban oriented or just plain Marxist oriented, or anyway people you were kind of watching for particularly in the visa function?

GODARD: Oh yeah, there were a lot of those. And there were sympathizers with Castro and Castro's revolution, especially on the university campuses. We were always watching that. We had access to voluminous files on activities by various left-wing groups. Like everywhere else I've been in Latin America, it was very difficult to find a successful politician who hadn't himself passed through a radical phase flirting at least with radical leftist politics, so it was not unusual at all to find that sort of mention in the background. In those days it was dangerous to go onto most university campuses in Latin America if you were an American. After my time in the consular section I spent several months in the political section developing contacts with student organizations, because that was part of our charge as young political officers, go out and meet young political leaders. But that's kind of hard to do when you couldn't safely work on the university campus. I don't recall

having any student contacts, other than those I met in my English classes at the cultural center that USIS (United States Information Service) ran there.

Q: How about ties to Colombia. Were they there anymore, did you discern them or not?

GODARD: No, Panama was wrested from Colombia. Teddy Roosevelt had a real strong hand in that. But back in those days, drugs, it was not an important conduit for drug trafficking.

Q: But also even the Colombia connection even before the taking over of Roosevelt, to me it was sort of kind of an appendage. There were mountains in between, and there really wasn't much back and forth anyway.

GODARD: It was tenuous. The geography is really, that's still the one gap in the Pan-American highway of the Darien jungles in Panama. So the ties between Colombia on the continent of South America and the isthmus, that little piece of the isthmus with Panama were pretty tenuous.

Q: After two years, 1970 whither?

GODARD: After I left Panama City I was in David and had an interesting tour there. I should tell you about my brush with Manuel Noriega back in those days. The DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) called me into his office one day, this is when I was in the political section during my rotational tour, and asked me if I'd like to go to David and be the principal officer, and I leaped at it. We had an opening up there because one of our officers, he was just back from Vietnam, and he had resigned in protest against policies he thought were favoring the colonels that had taken over the government. So we had a vacancy up there, and he asked me if I wanted to go. My wife was pregnant with our first child, but yeah, we decided to go up there and do it. And up there, there was a Neanderthal of an officer who was his own commander, and he had begun a process of just arresting American citizens left and right, and I got word of this. He certainly didn't report it to me.

Q: This was a Panamanian?

GODARD: A Panamanian zone commander. This nun got word to me that these American citizens, there were seven or eight of them in jail, being held without letting the consulate know. And I pounded my fist, and finally got access and they were released to me, and we lodged a real stiff protest. And so this colonel was replaced by Major Noriega, Manuel Noriega, who was, interestingly enough, a real breath of fresh air after this other guy. He was working for good relations with the American consulate, so I had a pretty good relationship with Tony Noriega back in those days. He went on of course to do bad things. While Noriega was the zone commander, I was in David when there was a coup against the man who emerged from the military, Golthe, against Omar Torrijos, the coup against him while he was in Mexico City. And for a while there, my little consular district looked like the only place that had not gone over to the colonels who were trying to take over from Torrijos. But Noriega remained loyal, and kept open the airport where Torrijos could fly back from Mexico City and then led the troops up in the north, in Chiriqui, and triumph back to Panama City. Well I was the one letting them know in Panama City that it wasn't over yet, that these guys had not consolidated their power. For some reason they didn't cut my telephone line so I had a line of communications. And I'm told that it's in large part because of my reporting, because we had reached the stage where we were going to recognize this new government of colonels, and they were not in control of the country because of what was happening up in my consular district. So, that was my introduction to Latin American history.

Q: Again in 1970, whither?

GODARD: I went off to become the deputy director of the office of the coordinator of human affairs in Miami. Very unusual Foreign Service assignment. In those days we had an office in Miami because of all the action going on in Cuba. We had Cuban exile groups that were going across the straits and shooting up villages. We had airplane hijackings to Cuba and we had a role in Miami of coordinating the return of these planes to the United

States. We were point of contact with the Swiss who were the ones who represented our interests in Havana in those days.

Q: We didn't have an office there did we?

GODARD: No American presence. The Swiss were representing us, and they had moved into our old embassy in Havana, so they kept up the real estate. And we also had incidents involving fishing vessels. The primary thing though, was Cuban refugee airlift. There were two flights of Cuban refugees being brought to Miami, getting processed, and resettled there all over the United States by the old HEW department. So we were coordinated. Staying in touch, the department felt like it needed to have a State presence to keep abreast of what was going on in all of these areas. We were also the voice of the neutrality law and trying to get the exile groups to cut it out in terms of shooting up Cuban fishing villages and so forth. Interesting tour, gave me an opportunity to live in Miami for two years.

Q: '70 to '72. Did you have a boss?

GODARD: My boss was Matthew Dinsdale Smith II. He was a great boss, a real mentor, and real smart guy. He went on from there, I guess he was reaching retirement time, he went on to Matamoros. He was the consul general there, and then retired. But he and his wife were very good to us, and we had a great time with them. It was a funny office. We were in the federal building. There were only two officers there, myself and the director of the office. We had to close up at five o'clock. The security was such that the building, they closed it down, you had to turn the key or whatever it is on the security system at five o'clock or it got very complicated. So it was a nine to five kind of job, unless there was an aircraft hijacking. You handled that from home on the telephone, keeping in touch with all the folks that had to be involved. At one point, I remember I had three airplanes in the air at the same time heading for Havana from various different cities. They were hijacking planes. It had really become the thing to do all over the place.

Q: What was your relation and what did you see of the Cuban exile community in Miami at that time?

GODARD: Quite a lot. We were in dialogue with them all the time. When Matt moved on to his new job, I became the director so I was the main contact point with a number of the exile groups. They were interested in talking to us. The exile leaders would come and go and there was a grand old guy, Jose de la Coriente, that I remember being particularly important there. There were the really rough and ready types, the alpha 66 types we had some contact with as well. And then there were civic leaders who were Cuban Americans who were in exile politics, but were also becoming politically prominent. They became much more prominent of course as more and more of them became American citizens. It was an introduction to a different kind of politics than what I had seen in Panama. Cuban exiles were just learning. They weren't as many as they are now, and they were just learning how politics operates in southern Florida. They were still at that point resisted by, their influx was being resisted by Floridians, because it was changing the nature, even then, the nature of southern Florida. That's why, at their insistence, as these Cuban refugees would come in off the airlift, the obligation was to resettle them outside of Florida. That didn't last. We settled them as far away as Alaska in some cases, but in most cases, because they had family there and that's where the center of exile community life was, they eventually drifted back to southern Florida, built up the population to what it is now.

Q: You said part of your job was to stop exiles and mounting these little attacks against Cuba. I one time did a book called the American Counsel in which I was looking at the consular service in the nineteenth century. The consulates spent a hell of a lot of time trying to stop, they were called filibusters at that time, and a different type, I mean these were Cuban exile groups trying to raise hell against the Spanish authority and they would organize and take off and they were bad incidents.

GODARD: Our main legal instrument that we were enforcing was the neutrality laws. Very vague legislation we discovered. There weren't any prosecutions unless they really

went beyond the pale. There was one man who actually took a bazooka and fired it into a visiting Soviet vessel in Miami Harbor. He got sent to jail for a while. There were no arrests to speak of. What you had was you were constantly jawboning and trying to threaten with legal action and whatever these exiles. They were clever too in the way they mounted their activities clandestinely. They trained in the Everglades and it's not that difficult to get weapons, and then they took off. I was struck by this when I recently went to Fort Lauderdale as well, the number of boats in southern Florida is absolutely astounding, and even back in those days it was easy for them to get access to vessels of one kind or another; it was impossible for the Coast Guard to keep up with this. There weren't that many incidents but we were making a good faith effort to stop it because there was no point to it really.

Q: Did you run across reverse Cuban agents trying to infiltrate, were they around?

GODARD: I'm sure they were and subsequently we learned that Castro certainly had over the years, had the exile groups well penetrated. Very easy to do because there was an influx of so many Cuban refugees over the years. There weren't any celebrated instances, but Miami is always full of rumors that so and so may be a Cuban agent. But there were no celebrated spies captured while I was there.

Q: Did you get a look at the Cuban community as it was developing there at the time?

GODARD: I did and I recognized its potential. Also, it's talent. These are extraordinarily talented people who had arrived with nothing but the clothes on their back and got to work. And they took on all kinds of menial jobs and maybe three or four jobs in order to support their families, and make something of themselves. Took advantage of opportunities to get their kids educated. Hardworking people. You see the result in Miami. They have made it a place, it's really quite astounding.

Q: Had Miami at this point become the city of choice of Latin Americans when they were going out to whoop it up or to shop or do something?

GODARD: I think that was happening. When I was there, there were a few groups from other countries, but Cubans were the largest, and then there was an old Puerto Rican community as well in Miami. In fact, the mayor while I was there was from that Puerto Rican community, from a wealthy business family. But it was still to realize fully its potential. It was beginning to happen, but it wasn't like it is now, where it's a bilingual city and you had to have English everywhere. It was difficult when the Cubans first arrived, having to cope with that.

Q: I realize you worked for Cuba first, but did Haiti play any role when you were there?

GODARD: No. I don't remember any issues concerning Haiti that I had to handle. I don't think the exiles had reached the size that they are now, of course. I just don't remember it being an issue.

Q: The man, he's now dead, I forget what his name is, Mas, was he..

GODARD: Mas Canosa. He was one of my contacts. Later on he became much more prominent and influential and set up the Cuban American Foundation. I knew him and ran onto him later because he was a businessman too, and had interests in other countries. I ran onto him in Nicaragua while I was assigned there.

Q: Did you get any pressure from any particular congressmen or senators, particularly from Florida or anything, on what you were doing? What you were doing, did it ever get controversial?

GODARD: I think we had pretty good support from the Florida delegation. We had particularly close relations in those days with Dante Fascell who was in the same federal building. His office anyway, we knew the folks in the office quite well. But that's the only

member of Congress, of course he represented part of Miami, and was very interested in the Cuban issue, stayed up on it very closely. But that's the only congressional interface that I recall.

Q: Who were hijacking planes going to Cuba and never thought about going any other way?

GODARD: There have been studies of sort of the psychology of these people. They were not necessarily sociopaths, but people who were loners, disaffected with society, may have come late in life onto leftist ideology and maybe not at all. Just the idea of hijacking a plane had a particular psychological appeal to a certain kind of psychosis of some kind. And they weren't dull, some of them were criminals, sort of a mixed bag of disaffected people who were unhappy with their life, they very often had lots of family problems and money problems, whatever.

Q: We went through that stage, some of us have forgotten now, but hijacking planes. I noticed they were sort of keeping score, and at your time, our officials got a little tired of it and started killing them. There was a significant number of people who tried to do this, were picked off by a sniper.

GODARD: And we've put in place some pretty severe penalties for hijacking as well, so there's a lot of disincentives now and especially with increased security on planes and so forth. It's a lot more difficult than in the old days to get away with something like that.

Q: What about the other way? Were you running across Cubans on Cuban planes, or refugees taking..

GODARD: Refugees were coming all the time. In those days of course we had the Cuban refugee airlift which was bringing people in legitimately. These were folks who had signed up to leave and Castro had agreed to let them leave. We provided a plane to bring them from Cuadadero Beach on over to Miami Airport. But there weren't aircraft being hijacked.

Mostly the folks coming across were in some cases on inner tubes or collections of inner tubes that they'd put together, rafts, really dangerous stuff. Some of them didn't make it. We know that, because we'd find them. The Coast Guard would find their vessels where they just didn't make it across. But really heart rending stories of folks coming across.

Q: As a Foreign Service officer and working mainly in the Latin America area, did you form any feeling about what was going on in Cuba and about Castro?

GODARD: I read everything I could get hold of about Cuba. I was hearing the viewpoint of the recent exiles from Cuba. Over the years I developed an opinion of Fidel that he is a true believer in radical Marxist society. We entertained over the years the idea that it would be possible to have some sort of accommodation, have some sort of reconciliation with Fidel. But I don't think that that was going to be possible, unless we were willing to accept it on his terms; and his terms are pretty draconian in terms of our having to swallow the kind of society that he's imposed on Cuba and without opposition. With no tolerance at all for free press, a very authoritarian figure and I don't think there's any compromise. And we sort of vacillated over the years and tried every time we could to work something out, but I don't think Fidel is really interested in a real compromise and meeting us halfway. I think he wanted us to collapse and become a communist regime as well, and that's what he waited for.

Q: I've dealt with exile communities one way or another over time, I think we all have, and often they have very unrealistic viewpoints. You know, they think that if only something happened, the United States does something, they're going to go right back to where they came from. And often these exile groups don't fit very well with the settlement. People grew up in the United States, they seem to see things through a particular lens that we don't... did you pick up this?

GODARD: Yeah, certainly in the old days, the exiles had that view, that if they just get rid of Fidel then they could go back and play an important role in the future of Cuba. Now

over the years I've certainly come of the opinion and I think I developed this even back when I was in Miami, that the future of Cuba is going to be coming from the Cubans who are there. There's no reason that exiles, some of them at least, could not play a role back there, and I've seen that happen in other countries I've been in; in Nicaragua for instance, after the revolution there was a return of hundreds of Nicaraguans who had gone into exile. And indeed they have played a role and many of them have played important political roles. But it's been a long time in Cuba, and the society has changed radically, and so the starting point for an exile to be relevant to the politics is just too steep a learning curve for them to be relevant I think. You know, and that I saw certainly in Chile where the same thing to a certain extent happened, where there was a lot of exiles left during the Pinochet period and many of them returned, as many proportionally as did in Nicaragua. But a lot of them came back, and they played important roles, but the people who have built the future of Chile are those who stayed behind and suffered through the dictatorship and were positioned to take over the politics of the country. I see the same thing probably happening in Cuba. There's no doubt, and they become more important with time, that the exile community could play a very important role in bankrolling reconstruction in Cuba, as they have done quite well in southern Florida in particular, but in other parts of the United States as well. And they retain an interest in Cuba, so there's potential there as a development force, and I saw that happening in Guyana, my last post overseas, where the exile community is enormous in Toronto and in New York in particular. And what they send back, not just through businesses although that's an important part of the economy of Guyana and many other countries in Latin America, but investments by the exile groups, and know-how and expertise that they also bring back to the country. There's a lot more potential there if there were more opportunities for them.

Q: Well then in 1972 you went to Washington?

GODARD: Went to Washington for a year where I was one of the desk officers in the office of Cuban affairs and did what desk officers do: answer congressional correspondence,

inquiries from American citizens about problems of one kind or another they had with Cuba, did a lot of briefing papers of one kind or another.

Q: What was Castro up to during that time? We're talking about what, '72 to '73?

GODARD: Well, he was consolidating his position. There were still these sort of pinpricks from the exile groups, and there were those that sort of thought that they could recreate in the exile community something like the Bay of Pigs only successful this time, coming out of Florida. So there continued to be those little problems. But he was consolidating his position and at that stage he was also building up his alliances in other parts of Latin America. Later on, after developing some very strong support, for what started happening in Central America, the Salvadoran revolution in particular, support for the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

Q: Well was he doing anything in Africa?

GODARD: In those days I don't remember it being an issue. I think that was still to come when he launched his initiative in Africa.

Q: Were we doing anything vis-#-vis Cuba? Any initiatives or anything like that you recall during this time?

GODARD: It was mainly status quo I think. We had determined at that point that we were not going in for violent overthrow of Castro, and that's why we were trying to tamp down the exile activities. And I think as much as anything our thought at that point was that he would fall of his own weight at some point. I guess we underestimated his staying power.

Q: Yeah well we were talking about 30 years more.

GODARD: My entire career. That's the thing. When I first took on this assignment of Cuban affairs I was real excited about it because I thought, “So, it's going to change. Cuba, it will be a great opportunity for a young diplomat to build his career on expertise in

Cuban affairs." It's the same policy, same hostile environment, although we have opened up our liaison office.

Q: I realize you were way down on the feeding order, but did you get any feel for the level of Henry Kissinger, of Secretary of State, or...

GODARD: No.

Q: He really was renowned for having very little interest in Latin America.

GODARD: Yeah. Didn't touch my life. Certainly not when I was in Cuban affairs.

Q: Ok, well then in '73 or so you moved out?

GODARD: While I was in Washington I got a call toward the end of my tour. I guess it was the political section chief who'd called me, and recruited me for a job in Managua, Nicaragua. This was right after the earthquake in December of '72 when the city had been wiped out. It sounded real interesting, the job did, when I talked to my future boss and somehow I sold it to my wife, taking our newborn son and my little girl down to the ruins of Managua. I accepted the assignment and it was a very interesting tour.

Q: You were there from when to when?

GODARD: Summer of '73 until summer of '75.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

GODARD: The ambassador in those days was Turner B. Shelton. He was a conservative. I don't know if he was a great donor to the party. He used to be a filmmaker.

Q: I'm told that one of the things he had done at various times was make sure that congressmen were very happy wherever he was.

GODARD: The story is that he was in Budapest I think it was and Nixon, during those years in exile before he came back and after he had lost the governor's race in California, did some traveling. And he was very well taken care of by Turner B. Shelton in Budapest and that's where the connection was established. I don't know if apocryphal or not.

Q: My ambassador, same period, was Henry Tasca in Athens, who had done the same for Nixon in Morocco.

GODARD: Ok. Well Shelton's claim to fame before was I think Hopalong Cassidy films was one of the things that he did in Hollywood and he was very close to the Somoza government in Nicaragua.

Q: One of the stories that still circulates in Foreign Service circles is how he closed the residence down after the earthquake. He was not very welcoming to anybody who needed housing or even to go to the bathroom or something like that.

GODARD: That's right. Those were the stories. I wasn't there immediately after the earthquake, they had people that found appropriate housing by the time I got there, but those were the kinds of... I lived for two years with earthquake stories from all the people who had been there. From Nicaraguans and from the embassy staff, and one of the stories was that they camped out on the grounds, but were not allowed in the building for the operation of the embassy immediately after the earthquake. Because the embassy building was completely destroyed. It was on the cusp of a volcano and there was a fault that ran right under it. The one person that died was the ambassador's secretary I think. Staff housing collapsed next to the embassy. But yeah, there's lots of stories about the ambassador and his wife not being particularly outgoing toward the staff during those times of crisis.

Q: Well then, what was the political situation like when you got to Nicaragua in '73?

GODARD: It was a pact that had been concluded by Somoza who was a very able politician. The conservative party was the traditional opposition to his government, and then Somoza sort of double crossed the guy that he'd made the deal with, Fernando Ag#ero, and made a deal with lesser lights in the conservative party and had somebody on a triumvirate that he had created who was much more malleable. It was essentially a military dictatorship. The Somoza family ran it as a family enterprise. They had one of the major newspapers there. The competition was a conservative politician, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, who was the most prominent opposition force there. They very wisely allowed the opposition to maintain that aspect of democracy, but they controlled very closely the economic life of the country. A lot of corruption. And that set the stage for the Sandinista revolution, and I saw just the beginnings of that toward the end of my tour.

A celebrated incident happened. I was in Costa Rica with my in-laws who were visiting at the time. As I was driving back I heard over the news that the border was being closed and there was some sort of problem in the capital. The Sandinistas had mounted a dramatic attack on the home of a former labor minister at a Christmas party. They had captured most of the cabinet, their ambassador to the United States who was Somoza's brother-in-law, Somoza's sister, almost got our ambassador who was there. A good part of the diplomatic corps was at this same function. And they held them hostage and they negotiated on and on and finally obtained the release of some of the Sandinista figures that had been arrested and were in jail at that point. And it was the cardinal of the Catholic church who was the primary negotiator and I think the Spanish ambassador played a role as well. Dean of the diplomatic corps. And as I left town they had negotiated transportation to the airport and they went on to Cuba. As they left town, people along the sides of the streets applauded as they left. During the two years that I'd been there, the Sandinistas, we'd heard rumors about their being up in the hills. Every once in a while there were shootouts of one kind or another that we only were able to gather limited information about what had really happened. So we knew that there was this activity out there, but the attitude of the public toward the Sandinistas after that incident was

a pretty dramatic indication that the day of the Somozas was coming to an end. And after that the momentum kept growing. There were other dramatic guerilla activities, and their neighboring states, particularly the Costa Ricans, were aiding and abetting the Sandinistas.

Q: As a political officer, what were you doing?

GODARD: The ambassador pretty well monopolized contact with the foreign minister and Somoza; those were his primary contacts. And I, as a political officer, part of my job was young leaders' opposition parties. I was particularly in contact with the Christian democrats, and some of the other conservative politicians of one kind or another. I was also the labor officer. There was a big hospital strike there where I co-authored with my boss a dissent channel cable reporting on the events in that strike. The ambassador had refused to send it out, so we sent it as a dissent cable. It was a good opportunity for me to learn my trade as a political officer. It was the job of taking people out to lunch, entertaining them at dinner, and getting to know personally political leaders I would subsequently run across during my career as they became more important.

Q: But now was Shelton, was he the ambassador the whole time you were there?

GODARD: Yeah. He was there for almost four years in all I think.

Q: Was there any disquiet within the embassy about too close ties to the Somoza and company?

GODARD: There certainly was in the political section. And there was always tension involving my boss in particular.

Q: Who was your boss?

GODARD: Jim Cheek was the chief of the political section. The ambassador, as I say in talking about the dissent channel message, it was sometimes difficult to get our reporting cleared up to Washington.

Q: What was the issue on the hospital negotiations?

GODARD: Well, it was pooh-poohed and discounted as a significant event by the front office. We didn't want to make too much of it because it was still early, but it was a significant concession I think on the part of the government, finally coming to this agreement. So we wanted to get that story out, and we finally did. The guy who handled that message was Luigi Einaudi who was on Kissinger's staff at Policy Planning and Jim actually got a commendation, what was the award?

Q: The Rifkin award.

GODARD: He subsequently got the Rifkin award for a lot of other things that he had done. So it was a difficult situation, and that continued after Jim left. I was there by myself for a while, and then Jerry Sutton followed, my next boss, also a very strong officer.

Q: How were relations with the ambassador?

GODARD: At my level they were pretty nonexistent. Didn't have much contact with him, he didn't have much to do with me. The DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission), I saw him..

Q: Who was the DCM?

GODARD: Leland Warner was the DCM in those days. And he was a good DCM in terms of supporting his ambassador, and was certainly not a sympathizer of a more balanced approach to reporting on Somoza. Bob White was the DCM before. Shelton had asked for him to be replaced. They brought in another DCM who he could get along better with. Bob

went on to bigger and better things later on. But the contact I had with the ambassador was very, very limited.

Q: Did you get any feel for this Somoza support within the United States? I think he had been at West Point, and a congressman had been his roommate, a West Point graduate or something.

GODARD: John Murphy was the guy I think he'd been a roommate with. Somoza was a very capable politician, and a very personable guy to deal with one on one, and had quite a following back in the States. Folks that he knew personally and people like Congressman Murphy were willing to really stand up for him. So he had a certain amount of support back in the States and certainly they had through the ambassador the ear of the Nixon administration. Things began to change after Nixon stepped down. It became more and more difficult to ignore the rising opposition to the dictatorship, and also more difficult to ignore the kind of corruption that was going on. We were pouring a lot of money in there through AID (Agency for International Development).

Q: One of the things that often happens in an embassy is that the upper reaches of an embassy, the ambassador supported by his DCM and all, can often understand or get very close to the powers that be in the country. And I'm talking about a country where there's corruption, where there's a dictatorship of one form or another. And the junior officers, sometimes mid-career officers are kind of seething underneath. They want to get out and change the world. I mean this is a normal dynamic that played out in families everywhere else. Was this going on in Managua?

GODARD: Oh yeah. All the other officers were pretty appalled at the policy approach that we were taking with the Somoza government. Not all of them, but almost all of them. We had a very active social life, some of my best friends are still people that I had known in Managua. Those relationships have been enduring. Got together a lot and talked about the

sorts of things that were going on. And it sort of duplicated itself in our wives' lives as well in terms of the us and them kind of situation, in that his wife was a very strong personality.

Q: This is Leslie.

GODARD: Yes, Leslie Shelton. Who ran the wives' group with an iron hand sort of thing, and was also very supportive of Dona Hope Portocarrero de Somoza, Anastasio Somoza's wife. That was just when things were changing in the Foreign Service, when there were prohibitions against mentioning the wives' role in the performance reports of an officer. And there was a lot of new guidelines. There was actually an attempt to suppress that cable when it came out, and my wife was one of the people who was leading the wives in taking a principled position that they too could.. there were little things, the fundraising, how the money was spent, stuff like that, that they took a stand on and were instrumental in a small way in moving the status of spouses in the Foreign Service in the right direction I think.

Q: Had any of the figures, Ortegas or anyone else, crossed your path at all, the Sandinista type?

GODARD: They were all in the hills. They were all clandestine. I can't think of any who became prominent members of the directorate of the FSLN (Frente Sandinista de Liberaci#n Nacional) who were out in the open. They were either in exile somewhere else or in the hills.

Q: People you were acquaintances were saying, “Well you know I've got a friend who was a college friend of mine, he's up in the hills,” that sort of thing?

GODARD: There were actually some of the lead families in Nicaragua whose sons were a part of this revolutionary movement. They were some of the best families in Nicaragua. Those names reappeared in the FSLN directorate later on, in the leadership of the party. So you heard stories like that, about the Carreon kids had disappeared, and there's rumors

that they're up in the hills, and then the university campus here again was just awash with the pro-FSLN sympathy. And there were also, as it became clearer for the legitimate political parties, the ones that were not in clandestinely, who were operating, the Christian democrats, social democrats, the conservative party, and some others, that the real gain was the Sandinistas because they were the only way they were going to get rid of this guy, open the society up. Later on they formed a coalition of support, and eventually you have parties clear across the political spectrum, from communist to social democrats to conservative party figures supporting the revolution. And that's how many of my contacts whom I had known suddenly became cabinet ministers and whatever in the government that finally came to power.

Q: Did we have much contact, it was called the national guard wasn't it? This was Somoza's military force. How were they looked upon?

GODARD: They were corrupt. I think their loyalty was maintained through this system of corruption from the Somozas. They were giving pieces of the economy, in fact headed up autonomous, rather semi-autonomous agencies of one kind or another of government entities and whatever. Among the officers, I don't remember any heroes out there. They were a pretty disreputable bunch far as I could tell. Somoza himself headed up the national guard, but his half brother, illegitimate son of his father's, was the general in charge.

Q: Did you press Chamorro?

GODARD: Pedro Joaquin Chamorro.

Q: And his wife Violeta. Were they part of your..?

GODARD: Oh yeah. I knew them both. In fact, when I came back, that trip I was telling you about from Costa Rica, this seizure of Chairman Castillo's house. My assignment from my boss, Jerry Sutton, was to go see Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, because immediately

what Somoza had done was occupy the principal offices of Cesar, that was his paper, and impose strict censorship on the paper. So I went to demonstrate, show the flag is what it amounted to, that we were concerned and watching very closely what was going to happen to Pedro Joaquin Chamorro. He was very glad to see me. Took me around the paper and introduced me to the military people who were there watching the operation of the paper and so forth. I don't think he ever forgot that gesture because it was a very tense moment. He always lived on the edge and finally was killed by somebody acting on behalf of Somoza I think, elements of a coup in that. Anyway, he was always sort of on the edge of tolerance for the Somoza regime. But they were the true voice of opposition.

Q: How about his wife Violeta?

GODARD: I had met her. At that stage Violeta was very much a housewife. She did not play a preeminent role in politics. She was of course the president when I came back the second time, so I got to know her quite well. But at the time I first knew her, she was very attentive to her guests and ran around getting them drinks and making sure that you were taken care of and all of this sort of thing. She sort of repeated that pattern as president. Very can I get you anything?

Q: What about later when the Sandinistas took over, which wasn't that much later, it became very much the in thing with what do you call it, the glitterati, the chattering class in Europe and in the United States, was there any sort of group from this particular group, the commentators or the czars and all, who were protesting against the Somoza government, or was this not on their radar?

GODARD: Among the opposition?

Q: I'm thinking in the United States or in Europe.

GODARD: Well, I think it was a little early for that. There was some literature about the dictatorships in Latin America, but I don't remember Somoza attracting a lot of high profile

attention. The problems of Nicaragua I don't think had really come on the screen. We were still pretty much in ignorance I think of the developing political turmoil in Central America. We were focused, insofar as we thought much about Latin America, on Cuba.

Q: And also on Chile.

GODARD: And Chile. Big problems in Chile. Argentina later. Central America I don't think really got on the screen.

Q: I talked to somebody who was ambassador to I think Costa Rica a little bit around this time, was saying that the highest level visitor he had was the lieutenant governor of Mississippi.

GODARD: That sounds right. We did have while I was there Somoza's supporters. I think Murphy came down, and this senator from Nebraska whose name I can't remember was visiting, but that was pretty much it. It was much before the slew of coattails that came traipsing though Central America all the time later in my career.

Q: How about Cuba? Was Cuba messing around there?

GODARD: Yes, later on. It was '75 when I left Nicaragua. The Sandinistas were victorious in '79, that was the time that the revolution occurred, but it was gradually building up and indeed Castro is the one who brought together the various elements of, I'm confusing the FMLN with the FSLN. I don't think he had a role in that. But anyway, all of the commandantes at one time or another spent a good deal of time in Cuba. They got some training there and then later on, particularly through Costa Rica, they established a supply line that all kinds of weapons were brought in for them to use, a big push against Somoza.

Q: Where did you go after Nicaragua?

GODARD: I wound up, what we call GLOPed.

Q: This was Kissinger came to Mexico City and found he had talked to all the ARA ambassadors and found out they really didn't know what NATO was or something.

GODARD: Really parochial. Yeah, those are the stories. Anyway, there was this policy of expanding our horizons and I was urged to take a tour, after Nicaragua, out of area. I looked at the possibilities and there was Bulgaria and Bangkok and Istanbul, Turkey. And I thought Turkey would be very interesting. I wanted to pick up the language, and my wife was fascinated by Byzantine history. I decided after having put her through the rigors of life in Managua with two little kids to do something that she would enjoy. She was really delighted at the idea of going to Istanbul, Turkey. She'd taken some courses in college in Byzantine history. So that's the assignment that I sought and got, and set off for FSI (Foreign Service Institute) to take Turkish training.

Q: How did you find Turkish as a language to acquire?

GODARD: Very difficult. I found it one of the hardest things I had ever done in my life. By that time my Spanish was very fluent so I didn't think languages were any problem. But Turkish was a completely different vocabulary, completely different grammar, and really tough to learn. I spent six hours, seven hours a day with four other guys and a teacher, grinding away, learning Turkish for 11 months, and learned enough to do my job.

Q: You went to Istanbul, you were there from what, '76?

GODARD: I was there from '76 to '79, three years.

Q: What was your job in Istanbul?

GODARD: I was the political officer in Istanbul. It was a fascinating job. I was also the human rights officer. There were a number of minority groups in Istanbul that we were particularly interested in. The Greeks and the Jewish community, and the Armenian community there, all of which had important, huge domestic American constituencies.

So there was quite a market for reporting on their status and quite a need for me to be in frequent contact with them. So I got to know those communities pretty well. Had a visit during that time from Allard Lowenstein, remember he was a UN Commissioner.

Q: He was sort of a political firebrand.

GODARD: He came out to Istanbul and wanted to go see the Grand Rabbino, the grand rabbi in the Jewish community here. Took him out to see them. His lime green suit jacket he wore to see the Grand Rabbino. Pretty cool guy. And then I also did the blood and guts airgrams that we were doing in those days. It was a sad time in Turkish history where there was right wing and left wing violence that you couldn't believe, terrorist actions. They were killing each other, the right and the left, and taking over universities, assassinating people in the streets. They turned against us as well. We were losing some people who were shot, NATO personnel in Turkey. It was something like 15 people a week were being killed in Turkey.

Q: This is tape three side one of Ron Godard. You were saying?

GODARD: Well I was also the labor officer and this number was the headquarters of DISC which was sort of the leftist labor confederation there. I stayed in touch with them, and as many political leaders as I could in Istanbul, building on what I'd learned in Managua. Tough to do with the language, but that got a little better with time. The fun thing in Turkey was going out to these different provinces and visiting with local political leaders and the local governors and so forth. I'd try to find out what was going on outside of Istanbul. My great coup while I was there was anticipating the call for elections in Turkish politics where it just, from my vantage point in Istanbul, it looked like the governing party was moving closer and closer to calling elections. I heard that all the time and just from what I was seeing, that's what I predicted. The embassy wasn't quite ready for that message and I was sort of pulled up short a little bit for getting out of step with reporting. But I was right.

And Prime Minister Demirel did call early elections and of course he lost them and that's when they had a change in government. Bulent Ecevit became the prime minister again.

Q: What did the Istanbul cover, Thrace and what else?

GODARD: All of Thrace. Izmir had a consul general of its own, but there were several provinces on the Asian side going back toward Ankara as well.

Q: Your consular district, Thrace and the other parts, did they have a different political thrust or status basically than in other parts of Turkey?

GODARD: Well, this was a period when there was, as it is now, concern about the fundamentalist Muslim parties coming to power and becoming much more influential. That was part of my job, reaching out to those groups, trying to establish some contact. Very tough work to do because they were very suspicious and not very receptive. But I tried to keep up with that. But for the most part, Istanbul and environs were the more westernized part of the country. It was pretty much a stronghold of the party of Bulent Ecevit which is a social democratic, almost western ideology, party. As opposed to the Justice Party which was much more conservative and as opposed to the conservative party, the Islamic party which had some following in Istanbul area, but very limited. They had more of a hinterland following.

Q: How were the minorities being treated? The Greeks, the Jews and Armenians.

GODARD: Government policy was to protect them and they certainly didn't want it to become an issue. But that said, they weren't doing a very good job of it and they were under pressure from particularly the right wing of these groups that were killing each other with the left wing. Those were hyper-nationalist types and they viewed the minorities as a Trojan horse in the society, it was evidence of their world view. There were little incidents of trashing of churches and roughing up priests and small bombs, not to do major destruction, just sort of blacken the sidewalk kind of thing going off. I've seen them,

I've seen the evidence of them. I checked that sort of thing out when they happened. So people were living under a good deal of tension. Not oppression I wouldn't say, but it's just a hostile kind of environment where things could happen that you wouldn't hope to have happen, where you're trying to raise your family. And they hung on because of faith in the historic mission of those communities, because they went back for so many centuries and really believed that they needed to be in Istanbul. So they held on. But it was kind of a tenuous existence, and so they were all going down and I think they have continued to go down. When I was there, I think the Armenians were said to be around 50,000 and I think they're much less now. Jewish community same, and Greek Orthodox community's dwindled down. The guy who is now the patriarch was one of my contacts in the Greek Orthodox church. Bartholomew. He was a young metropolitan at that time, and I actually got him out to the house a couple of times.

Q: Well, you know, I was in Athens from '70 to '74. I was consul general and the Greeks were always looking at the Turks, what are they going to do, and the Turks were the big thing. Did you find the Turks paid much attention to the Greeks?

GODARD: Oh yeah, they were ready. The border crossing there between Turkey and Greece while I was there was not used that much at all. They had these periods of confrontation over those little islands where they had conflicting claims for oil explorations and so forth. That was always bubbling up as an issue. Of course, when I was there we had imposed an arms embargo after Cyprus, so our relationship was not as cozy as it had been in the past. Very resentful of that, but the Greeks, they were quite suspicious of. Particularly with the Cyprus situation still sort of boiling over there.

Q: What about Istanbul's society? Was there sort of a western sophisticated society that was sort of the core of the business community?

GODARD: Very sophisticated, their own sort of pop music culture and western dress everywhere. Very stylish women in Istanbul. Traveled to Paris frequently and whatever. A

lot of hotels even then attracted quite a lot of tourism from the West. Germany in particular. There was a huge German mission there and a very good size Russian mission too of course.

Q: It was a Soviet mission in those days.

GODARD: Yeah, Soviet mission. And you could see why. Going through the Bosporus every day were these huge ships in the fleet in the Black Sea. One of the fun parts of my job was the contact with the Russian diplomats and some of the others there. Interesting times, because they're housed in these czarist houses that are dating from the Ottoman days. They've held onto those properties. Brits have a huge compound there too. We had sort of an Italian villa that we'd picked up that's a pretty good size. But they have historic buildings that are really gems.

Q: What about these groups who were fighting each other. Did we have any contact with them? How did we get information about the right and the left?

GODARD: That was mostly intelligence that we would pick up. Because there was a right wing party that they were sort of associated with, they had contact with them in Ankara. I didn't have contacts that I recall from that particular party in Istanbul. I don't think they were much of a force. And the left wing were underground terrorist groups, so we didn't have any contact with them.

Q: Were the Kurds a factor or were they all somewhere else?

GODARD: They didn't exist. They were called mountain Turks, and there was no recognition of this Kurdish presence. They were all around you of course. People didn't wear badges that said “Kurds”, but they were all over the place. Huge community in Istanbul. But they weren't recognized. Nowadays I understand they're getting their own radio stations and whatever, but you never heard the Kurdish language.

Q: Were they enough of a unified force to have contact with, or were they a voting group?

GODARD: Never surfaced. In Istanbul they did not. Of course, you go toward the east, that's all there is in many of those provinces. I bet it's infrequently. The Turks for one thing were extremely careful about controlling diplomatic travel in that area. I know our embassy tried to get out as often as it could, but our access was limited to those areas.

Q: Who was our consul general in Istanbul?

GODARD: There were two while I was there. One was Elaine Basham.

Q: I knew her when she was deputy principal officer in Zagreb way back.

GODARD: I really respected her. Robert Houghton was her replacement later on. And in the interim, Jeff Ogden was the deputy principal officer. He'd served in Greece before I think.

Q: Did you feel the hand of Ankara very much?

GODARD: Not really. Other than this little business about the report they were unhappy about that election business, but I got guidance. They were real professionals.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

GODARD: Macomber, William Macomber, Bill Macomber. And later on Ron Spiers was the ambassador. Macomber came down and swam the Bosporus. He was trying to swim the length of it, I think. I don't think he made it all the way. He was a very Outward Bound type. But no, we were left pretty much, they were down frequently because everybody in Ankara wanted to come down to Istanbul and we had an apartment there that the ambassador maintained where he came down on official business. And others in the embassy were allowed to use it so we had a lot of traffic. And we also had a wonderful asset there, the Hiawatha, this day cruiser that we had for tooling around on the Bosporus.

Later on I understand that was bombed at one point, but they managed to salvage it and it's still around.

Q: Did you get at all involved in the drug business, the arrests and all? This is sort of the era of the movie Midnight Express and all. So many of our kids were coming through there and picking up hashish then trying to get it to the States.

GODARD: Only peripherally. We had a sizeable DEA office there in Istanbul and a slightly bigger one up in Ankara. I remember when the movie came out, of course they didn't show it in Turkey. I went to see Midnight Express when I was in London and thought it was overdrawn a little bit, but probably generally accurate.

Q: How did you find the political types in the Istanbul area?

GODARD: Mixed bag. The mayor, I think, had a labor background. He came from the Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi which was the social democratic party I was talking about. They were very much into the labor, depending regularly on the modern labor movement that they had for their support. Sophisticated guy. Reflective generally of the elite in Istanbul. Very western ideas. What you saw when you got out of the province was a different animal. Much more conservative, but still imbued with those Ataturkian ideals about need for modernity and reform in Turkish society.

Q: What about Islamism? What was happening during the time you were there?

GODARD: It was kind of a new phenomenon. Religion was by law not supposed to be a factor in politics in Turkey. But there was this conservative party that was the third party and later became even stronger, and I think now a variation of it has become secular, or maybe the party in power now. But back in those days they weren't much of a force in Istanbul. But they were there, and they were working hard to build up their force. That's been since the revolution in Turkey. It's been a cycle of growing influence by a more,

not outwardly religious party, but in a party that was more conservative and appealed to Islamic sentiment in the country. But they were not that big a factor in Istanbul.

Q: Did we have military attach#s at our consulate general? I was just wondering because military was such a powerful force...

GODARD: I think there were noncommissioned officers attached to the consulate, and there was some kind of NATO office there. I saw a lot of military, because of course we had bases around there and the guys came into town all the time, to Istanbul. There was a military attach# there who was a major.

Q: Did somebody from the consulate watch Soviet ships going back and forth or was that taken care of?

GODARD: Sure. That was natural for us. We had some pretty sexy equipment that came through there. I remember when the Kiev came through the first time.

Q: A helicopter carrier.

GODARD: A very sophisticated piece of equipment. We all watched that one come in. The cameras were pretty intensely on that baby as it came through. But they all came through the Navy and there were people watching it.

Q: How about your wife? This was supposed to be her tour. How'd she like it?

GODARD: Well she loved it. Leslie made herself a expert on the bazaar and walked all of the walls, the old Byzantine walls, visited all of the old Byzantine churches. She also finally had an opportunity to go back to work while we were there, so she started teaching in a Turkish school, teaching English. Our kids had finally started school so she could do that. But she was a real asset in terms of showing people around because she knew the city better than anybody in the consulate. She really traveled all over the place. Whenever we had a CODEL (Congressional Delegation) or anything we'd put her to work showing

if not the spouses than the congressmen themselves. We had quite a few congressional delegations back in those days.

Q: Did you have any contact with our consulate general in Thessaloniki or not?

GODARD: No. Not at all.

Q: In other words, you weren't really being apprised of the temperature over in the other side of the Greek side.

GODARD: I'm sure that we infoed each other on cables and that sort of thing but I don't remember any traffic from Thessaloniki.

Q: It has to be seen or felt to be believed to understand how the Greeks feel about the Turks. You can say it, but... it's not rational, but it's a major factor.

GODARD: The Turks to a certain extent reciprocate that, but I don't think they're quite as hysterical.

Q: Ok, well this is probably a good place to stop. Let's see, you left in '79, is that right?

GODARD: That's right.

Q: Where'd you go?

GODARD: In '79 I went back to the Department where I began a congressional fellowship for a year.

Q: Alright, we'll pick it up then.

Q: Today is the 21st of November, 2004. Ron, tell me about your congressional fellowship.

GODARD: The congressional fellowship was a program that I had heard about from my previous boss in Managua, in the embassy, the chief of political section. And it sounded like a great program to learn a new area and very important aspect of foreign policy. I knew Jim Cheek, my previous boss, benefited from it tremendously. So when the time came, when I was up for assignment in Istanbul, I applied for the congressional fellowship, got the support of my superiors there, and went on. This was run by the American Political Science Association back in those days off the Johns Hopkins campus. We had very good orientations, a series of excellent readings. That's where I was first introduced to Norm Orenstein's work. I saw him on television the other night as a commentator on what's going on on the Hill. It was an excellent look into a side of foreign policy that I knew very little about. When I came into the Foreign Service I did the ritual visit to my congressman as a new Foreign Service officer. I got my picture taken with Senator Ralph Yarborough. My congressman, O.C. Fisher back in those days in West Texas, took us out to lunch; and that was about all the contact I'd had with Congress, other than with some congressional delegations at various times I came across and there were a lot of those in Istanbul. But it was something I was fascinated with and very much looked forward to the assignment. And it was very rewarding. I worked on the House side and the Senate side. This was another sort of humbling and educational process where one had to go out and sell oneself on the Hill. You didn't have a designated slot to slip into. You had to make one for yourself. Now we were pretty good commodities on the market over there, the Foreign Service officers in those days, and I suppose we still are, as staff members. Free labor with at least some expertise.

Q: Good writers.

GODARD: And good writers which they were interested in. And so I made the rounds and was able to land a new position that they made for me in the office of Floyd Fithian who was a junior member of the Foreign Affairs committee on the House side. He was a Democrat from Lafayette, Indiana. He was a former diplomatic history professor at Purdue.

He was very much interested in foreign affairs himself, but came from a very truncated, interesting district that was part urban, part rural. Had an academic center like Purdue in the middle of it. I found him a very good guy to work with. He was really interested in doing something in the area of foreign affairs but of course his constituency had zero interest in foreign affairs. But during my tenure there, there was an opportunity for us to at least make a small contribution. This is when the hostage situation had occurred in Tehran. And everybody on the Hill was floundering around for some sort of response. I came up with a proposal and sold it to Floyd to introduce the idea of creating the United Nations office of diplomatic security, whereby they would be the office that could provide sort of a tripwire. We were thinking our people were kept in Tehran by our government past the point of no return because of political considerations. Were there an international agency that monitored the diplomatic protection under international conventions for foreign diplomats, and were that agency empowered to make a determination that it was no longer safe or at least do a gradation of safeness, then it would be much easier and much less politically costly for a country to pull its people out.

Anyway, I sold the idea to Floyd. As I look back it may have been a bit na#ve but actually I discovered later on as I staffed it through that there were people on the House foreign affairs committee, on senior staff that actually thought about the same thing. I got to write a number of speeches for Floyd on this subject. I prepared him for a radio broadcast back home on the issue, because this was an issue that had some resonance back home in the district. Actually wrote the legislation. In the congressional record, there was a proposed resolution calling for the creation of this entity. It didn't' go any further than that. Floyd I think shortly after I left his office was gerrymandered out of his district anyway and left Congress, ran for I think state prosecutor or something like that.

One of the most interesting parts of my time with him was working with him in his home district. He took me back home in that part of Indiana and I traveled with him. In fact, I was his driver, as we went from coffee klatch to coffee klatch, little town meetings and whatever that he spoke to and it was a really great experience for a Foreign Service

officer to get in contact with how the political process really works and how foreign policy issues are handled. It was also an important period for my particular area. By that I mean Latin America. I came back right after the triumph of the Sandinista revolution, and there was on the Hill at that time, legislation put forward by the Carter administration for some assistance to the Sandinista government that was designed to give us some leverage with them. It was a very hard sell. Finally it did pass, but as Floyd's foreign affairs staffer, what was my rank back then, I was probably an old three or four.

Q: That's like a major.

GODARD: Little less than major. Captain. And I had deputy assistant secretaries coming to talk to me to lobby for this legislation and that was kind of fun. They couldn't get in to see Floyd so they settled for me. Then I went over to work on the Senate side on the staff of Senator William Roth from Delaware. I worked for him as his foreign policy advisor. I wrote some speeches on whatever the issues of the day were, and was interestingly with his staff, got involved more with budgetary but bi-partisan issues. He was very interested in getting new contracts for the refurbishing of aircraft carriers in Delaware and working in conjunction with the caucus of all the different senators who were around in the Philadelphia area. I got to know an awful lot of different staffers and came to appreciate the importance of federal funding for jobs back home. The Senator was very interested in relations with Japan in particular, the far east. I got to do a little bit of work with him in that area. Came off of that assignment with a combination of both the lectures and the readings that we had done at Johns Hopkins and then the practical experience on the ground with pretty good understanding of the congressional dimension, and I think that served me very well with my career as I moved on.

Q: Well then it must be '80. Where'd you go, what'd you do?

GODARD: After that year I was assigned as the special assistant in the front office of the Western Hemisphere Affairs Bureau or ARA as it was called back then, the American

Republics. Came in at a time when William Bowdler, famous name, former ambassador to South Africa and to Guatemala, was the assistant secretary. He brought me on board as his special assistant. Also in the office by that time was my old friend James Cheek who was deputy assistant secretary and I had the opportunity to work directly with him. Of course, this was at the end of the Carter administration and he didn't win re-election so I got to see a transition.

Q: This is where the transition got really nasty. There was a lot of blood in the corridors of ARA.

GODARD: That's right. And I was right there in the front office. Really the awful thing was the style of it. I think looking back those responsible must regret it. William Bowdler was a proud and very dedicated public servant and was treated very shabbily and was given orders to clean out his desk and get out of his office overnight. That was very sad to watch. Another thing that was sad was later on the effort to make folks like Jim Cheek pay for having “lost Nicaragua”. There were people in the service who managed to protect Jim to a certain extent, but rather than getting an ambassadorship as he had richly earned by that time, he wound up going back on assignment to Harvard where he did a kind of Diplomat-in-Residence assignment. And he eventually was assigned as DCM to Nepal as I recall which was personally for he and his wife a wonderful assignment. They adopted a beautiful child who is now in college. A young man who was an orphan. So it turned out alright for Jim later on. At the time it was a particularly vindictive sort of hostile takeover that I don't think was necessary in the Foreign Service.

Q: You were close to this. Who was doing this?

GODARD: I think it was probably the transition team as much as anything who were responsible for some of these decisions. I really don't know to this day. I've read accounts of these goings on and I don't know of anyone who's taken personal responsibility for these sorts of actions.

Q: Jesse Helms who was the senator from North Carolina, his staff was very much involved in this.

GODARD: Yes, and a member of his staff, or who had formerly been on his staff, was part of the transition team. There were recommendations and there were demands in terms of locking down documents so they could pore over these and later on assign blame. It was just an approach that we don't need in the Foreign Service and I think it has become more or less a thing of the past. I haven't seen a transition quite as unfriendly in a sense.

Q: What happened to you?

GODARD: I was kept on as the special assistant and most of my tenure as a matter of fact was working with Tom Enders, who was the new assistant secretary, and his staff. It was a year as a special assistant. Back in those days the hours for this sort of thing were so killing that nobody took more than a year in that position. I never got away from the office until eight o'clock at night and had to come in early to have all the papers, the intel read before the principals came in.

So I got a job as special assistant to the counselor of the department who at that time was Robert McFarlane. He had come from, I think, the NSC in a secondary position and went back to the National Security Council later on as the head of it.

Q: I'd like to go back while you were with us working as the special assistant to the head of ARA. What had this transition purge done? Were people sort of looking over shoulders?

GODARD: There was certainly that, and an uncertainty about what was going to happen to folks. Ambassadors were replaced as you would expect, people like Bob White for instance who was our ambassador to El Salvador. It was a foregone conclusion that he was kind of a paladin of the human rights policy of Carter in those days, so it was expected to be a change. And there were other ambassadorships where there were a lot of changes. It happens regularly that in the front office there is pretty much a clean sweep

when there's a change of party. Although that didn't always happen. In this last transition from Democratic to Republican, some of the deputies were kept for a considerable period of time for deputy assistant secretaries before their new people were brought in. We were all professional Foreign Service officers and the question was are we going to be viewed as suspect for having implemented a prior policy. And after all the falderal was over under the Reagan administration, many elements of our human rights policies carries through. It was something we couldn't turn back on; it was institutionalized.

But a lot of corridor talk about how this thing was handled. Particularly with Bill Bowdler who was very widely respected, highly regarded. So I think we, and perhaps the political process, learned from that. It was the way not to do it, and to create that kind of acrimony in the department is counterproductive.

Q: You were more of a processor rather than an implementer of policy, but what was sort of the feeling about the situation in Nicaragua? Were we feeling that things were going the right way, the wrong way, or what should we do?

GODARD: Under the Carter administration we were back in those days giving them the benefit of the doubt and hoping to work with them. It became more and more apparent as we collected intel on it that they were actively engaged in aiding and abetting and financing insurrection in their neighboring states.

[End Tape 3, Side 1]

GODARD: We'd gone the extra mile. There were people especially on the Hill wanting to go further in opposition to the Sandinistas. But there were a lot of us who were certainly unwilling to give them the benefit of the doubt anymore because it was pretty well-established that they'd been playing that against us. They had used the time to arm and encourage further guerrilla activity in the isthmus. So there wasn't a lot of sympathy left for them. The policies that evolved after that, of supporting the contra activity was step by step. There was real opposition to the Sandinistas internally. We encouraged that, but

that opposition was there. There were an awful lot of people in Nicaragua who wanted a change of government. There was no democratic process left to bring that about, so therefore there were folks willing to take up arms against them. That was how the contra movement developed. They weren't completely creations of the United States I don't think, as they're often portrayed. The atrocities that occurred in some of the Mosquito villages on the east coast of Nicaragua were real. I talked to a lot of the people. The leaders who have suffered through that persecution. The Sandinistas really created, to a certain extent, this opposition themselves.

Q: This must have been very rough on your family wasn't it?

GODARD: Oh, the time I had to spend on this was very difficult. Interestingly enough, being away from the children at a particularly critical time was hard on me, but after I did that year as a special assistant in the front office in ARA, the job as counselor was not quite so demanding. Bud McFarlane was not at that time particularly engaged on Latin American issues. At least he didn't bring his staff in on it. He was more on the periphery of it and acting to a great extent in Middle East politics.

Q: Let's talk about Tom Enders who's one of the legends of the Foreign Service. From your perspective working with him, how did he operate and what was your impression of him?

GODARD: He's one of the most brilliant guys, Foreign Service officers I've ever seen. He wasn't a great people person. He came to Latin American affairs as pretty much a neophyte, but was a quick study. Even learning Spanish. For heavens sakes, as assistant secretary he regularly took Spanish lessons and by the time he finished his tenure as assistant secretary he could converse in Spanish. I found that quite impressive. A man of great intellect, and a guy who psyched out the situation, who saw the possibilities for negotiation. The big issue he was facing was how do we cope with the Sandinistas? How do we cope with this budding ally of the Soviet Union in Central America, and how do

we buttress this government in San Salvador that had such a deplorable human rights record at the same time. He had a tough assignment, but at one stage he managed to cobble together what I thought was a very clever approach to forming alliances with the budding democracies in the region to come to grips with the problem in Nicaragua. Working with the Costa Ricas and the El Salvadors and Guatemala, forming a community of democracies on the isthmus. So he had some good ideas, and some creative diplomatic solutions to some very difficult problems, but I think the political will to deal with the Sandinistas was not there, and his efforts to work out some sort of modus operandi collapsed because of that.

Q: I realize you were removed, but I mean you were sort of a fly on the wall. Did you feel a heavy hand from Jesse Helms and company?

GODARD: He was one factor, but there were others as well. Other conservative members of Congress, within the cabinet itself there were some pretty conservative people who were pretty uncompromising. This was back in the days of Caspar Weinberger. Over in the White House, I forget who was in NSC at that point, but there were no lack of ultraconservatives towards Central America. During the Carter administration, Central American problems had become the focus of a lot of fire. You had groups like the Santa Fe group that was developed out in New Mexico who advocated a much more conservative approach to the region. Those people were in the administration, some of them in one capacity or another. So Helms was certainly a factor, but in those days, I think that was before, he certainly was in the minority in the Congress, but he was a voice. Some of his staff, I can't remember now the name of the guy...

Q: Was he the one who was a former Admiral or something?

GODARD: No, this was a staffer. But the guy you're talking about was always on his staff, stayed on his staff. The fellow I'm thinking of actually left the Helms staff and was on the

transition team at one point and had been one who allegedly was directing some of the actions of retribution against the Foreign Service officers.

Q: Did Carter's getting the Panama Canal treaty through and all, did that come up? Was it a feeling that Carter had sold us down the river?

GODARD: That was another part of the litany of his crimes, having lost Nicaragua, and also having given away the Panama Canal. Still you hear resonance from that from more conservative circles, which is nonsense. I started my career in Panama and I had always thought that one of the smartest things we did was negotiate our way out. It really was an albatross and it was a negative starting point for relations with the Latins on almost any issue. It was always there; how could you do this to a tiny country sort of thing. But, as I say, it is still and was then certainly the fresh negative grounds for attack on the Carter administration.

Q: How about during that time, Castro and Cuba and all? Was that much, or was it sort of business as usual?

GODARD: Business as usual. As you recall, during the Carter administration there were some gestures toward Fidel. It seems like we have this cycle of our trying to come to some sort of accommodation with Fidel under certain administrations. Almost every administration has moved a little bit in that direction, then something would bite the hand that's trying to negotiate with them, and we'd find ourselves in worse relations than before. And this certainly happened under the Carter administration when we were trying to work out something and then they unleashed the Marielitos on us and set us back tremendously in working out any kind of peaceful accommodation. So that sort of has had a dynamic of its own, and I think during the Reagan years there were early on talks about going to the source sort of thing, but nothing like that happened. We did later on, after I had left the front office, go into Grenada for a variety of reasons. I think that action to a certain

extent chastened Castro a bit and he became much more careful about his activities and atmosphere.

Q: Counselor of the Department of State. What did the job consist of then? And you were doing this from when to when?

GODARD: McFarlane had an agenda and had some very substantive areas he was influencing. I've learned this in my reading since, more so than from when I was really there. I sat in on a lot of interagency meetings as the representative of the counselor. At that time, Bud was principally acting as Secretary Haig's man on the Middle East. He traveled a great deal and he was doing a lot of the negotiations at that stage, and so it was out of my area. That year seemed to go by very, very quickly. Wasn't a year where I felt terribly engaged or influential because I can't remember any particular issue we had on Latin America where we had great influence. He was doing other things, and that's the way the Counselor works. If it was a period when he was greatly interested in Latin America I think it would have been a different story, but Tom Enders, a strong figure himself, was in charge of Latin America.

Q: Did you get any feel for McFarlane's relationship with Alexander Haig?

GODARD: My impression was that it was very close. He was always being called in to sit in on very sensitive meetings. I think Haig had complete confidence in him to represent him in different meetings, and I thought it was quite close.

Q: Well then in '81, whither?

GODARD: In '81 I was selected to become the chief of the political section in San Jose, Costa Rica and took off for there with my family and served three years in San Jose. My ambassador, Frank McNeil has in his writing emerged as a critic of the Reagan foreign policy, but he stayed on for at least the first year, maybe year and a half of the Reagan administration as ambassador. He was an exceptional ambassador down there. Frank's

wife was Costa Rican. He understood the society, he had perfect Spanish and all of this. He was a great guy to have down there at that particular time. Costa Rica was important to us because it was, so to speak, one of the front line states with Nicaragua, and during part of Frank's tenure he had Rodrigo Carazo as the president of Costa Rica. He was completely in bed with the Cubans and the Sandinistas and supporting the revolution that had taken place in overthrowing Somoza. But then Frank was there for the presidency of Luis Alberto Monge and had an excellent relationship with him. As political counselor, my job was staying in touch with the opposition. In those days the Christian Democratic Party were in the opposition, and Raphael Angel Calderon was a contact of mine. He later became president and currently is in jail for bribery and corruption charges. But I got to know all of the players in Costa Rican politics. It being a small, dynamic, very active democracy, lovely country. I found it thoroughly enjoyable. But during the tenure of Frank McNeil and the subsequent ambassador, Curt Winsor, the dominating issue was the Sandinistas right next door. A lot of the exiles who came into Costa Rica, Nicaraguans, became part of the opposition to the Sandinistas. Many of these people were from the traditional parties. They were Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, you name it. They had supported the Sandinista revolution, and indeed when they first came to power many of these same politicians were put into cabinet. Violeta Chamorro, herself a conservative politician, her husband Pedro Joaquin was put in as one of the members of the junta, and Alfonso Robelo the private sector leader. All of these people, not Violeta, she stayed on, but many of the others like Alfonso Robelo and others came to Costa Rica. They moved into exile and so we renewed acquaintance with them, and an important element of my reporting was contact with those people.

Q: When you got up there, within Costa Rica itself, what was the political situation?

GODARD: Well, Costa Rica has been a stable democracy for many, many years. Decades. The president at that time was from the sort of social democratic party, the party founded by Pepe Figueres who was still around, and that was another wonderful thing to have a historic figure like him around. He was a contact of mine, got to know him.

Died several years back. Stable and active, but the issues were unique to Costa Rica. Domestic political reporting was not a hot item in Washington. People expected there to be opposition. There was a pattern of alternating from this Christian Democratic party, the Social Democratic party, the presidency and so there was no continuismo issues. Costa Rican democracy was solid and Costa Ricans were firm supporters of our policy under Luis Alberto Monge of opposing some of the policies of the Sandinistas. Indeed, they hosted while I was there, a conference where President Reagan came.

Q: Well Haig left by fall of '82.

GODARD: George Shultz came down. So while I was in Costa Rica I was the control officer for Reagan's big speech in the national theater. One of my favorite stories was talking the White House staff out of the idea of getting the Costa Ricans to tear out a pillar that was interfering with the line of sight. The national theater is a national treasure there, it's a little duplicate of the Paris opera house, and that was just anathema to them. But that speech in San Jose got a lot of press because right in the middle of it there was a communist deputy, I think it was Eric Ordon, stood up and harangued the president. Reagan was very good in situations like that. He made a comment about, isn't it wonderful in a democracy where everybody has an opportunity to have their say. The place erupted in tremendous applause, and that of course was the headline for the trip, that part of it. But that was a meeting of these Central American democracies. This organization that Tom Enders had worked so hard to pull together as an approach to the Sandinista problem.

Politics in Costa Rica, internal politics, were not tremendously compelling as far as foreign policy is concerned because it was something we didn't have to worry about.

Q: When you were there, were you watching an evolution of, you might say, the more leftist side of the political spectrum becoming more and more disillusioned with what was happening in Nicaragua.

GODARD: Certainly within the Liberaci#n National which is the Social Democratic party that was in power, the president was deeply disillusioned with the Sandinistas and was quite supportive of forming this coalition of democratic governments for their own survival. Because they saw the Sandinistas as willing to lash out and attack their neighbors. That was different. You think of social democrats as being sympathetic, and indeed they were.

Q: Somoza is not somebody you get very sympathetic about.

GODARD: Nobody was supportive of Somoza. As I say, the social democrats, the left, the traditional left in Nicaragua itself had been very supportive of the revolution. They had a coalition ranging from communists to the chamber of commerce that were behind the revolution against Somoza, so it was their fellow ideologue-like partisans in Nicaragua who were among the exiles who had to leave Nicaragua to come to Costa Rica so there was no sympathy to speak of. Plus it was accentuated on the public reception side by the fact that there was this tremendous exodus. It's always been an issue in Costa Rica. The presence of large numbers of Nicaraguans in the north, to the extent that Costa Ricans worry about losing their north at some point, because it'd become so Nicaraguan. It's not unlike the immigration of Mexicans into the United States as we've seen the ethnic balance change dramatically, although ethnically on both sides of the border between Costa Rica and Nicaragua are the same.

Q: Were the Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans a different breed of cat as far as how they approached things?

GODARD: Costa Ricans had a history of border problems for one thing. Ethnically they're about the same, certainly in the north. But Costa Ricans view themselves as the Swiss of Central America. Nicaragua has had no pretense over the years of being a political model for anybody, from one thing to another, and they're still going, trying to work it out one way or the other. On both sides of the border they are true nationalists. I mean, they're really intensely Nicaraguan, and that sort of fueled these occasional border disputes. I think they

may have resolved most of those issues now, but back in my day they would come up every once in a while. While I was in Costa Rica you had things like the presence of Eden Pastora who was a Nicaraguan comandante, Sandinistan comandante. Very charismatic fellow who had set up shop. He was actually married to a Costa Rican. He'd gone into exile and pulled his organization together of Nicaraguan expats and sort of set up a toehold in the southern part of Nicaragua sort of aspiring to the liberation of Nicaragua. He was assassinated by a bomb sneaked into his press conference. While I was there he was killed. I think the ambassador met with him once.

Q: Were there American interests, one always thinks of the United Fruit and all that, but were there American interests there that weighted importantly or not importantly on dealing with Costa Rica?

GODARD: The fact that Costa Rica had been a functioning and successful democracy for so many years made them a particularly important country for us as an example of how it could work. This was a time when everybody else looked pretty bad. I mean, Salvadorans had these repressive military governments, Guatemalans were killing their indigenous, Hondurans had a military government, or a very weak civilian government very heavily dominated by the military. Costa Rica stood out as a friend that was symbolically and materially too, because they had limited but important resources to contribute to efforts for democratization of the region. So they were quite important and we never would have thought of forming a multilateral approach to Latin America without having Costa Rica as a cornerstone.

Q: What about Mexico? I realize there are a whole bunch of countries between Mexico and Costa Rica, but was there an affinity there or not?

GODARD: Not particularly in Central America. Just as we are the colossus of the north, Mexico is the colossus to the north for a lot of Central America. They worry about that a little bit. Mexican culture is important in the north particularly. You see it in El Salvador,

now with all the Salvadoran immigrants that we have in the Arlington area you find these Salvadoran restaurants that are really kind of knockoff Mexican restaurants. In fact, many of them take on a Mexican guise but some of them are actually Salvadoran restaurants.

Q: Where we are sitting right now in Arlington, we're about three or four miles from a major center of El Salvadoran culture.

GODARD: It's a huge area for Salvadoran presence. But anyway, Mexicans have over the year exerted some influence but it's kind of touchy because they are the big guy, especially for a country like Guatemala that shares a border with Mexico, and they worry about their influence, but it's not by any means preponderant. They are a factor but do not dominate either culturally or politically.

Q: Were the Cubans messing around in Costa Rica?

GODARD: To a certain extent. There was a Cuban embassy there, very closely watched. Of course, the Cubans were very active in Nicaragua back in those days. There were sporadic things that the Cubans did but I think they were watched so closely by the Costa Ricans that they didn't get away with much.

Q: As political counselor, how well do you feel you were served by the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency)?

GODARD: What was going on in Costa Rica? Fairly well. For my work, they had assets and their reports were worth reading and they were one element, but throughout my career I've taken intel like that as just one element, and as a political officer, you gotta show me. I have to be able to confirm or go out on my own, develop my own views. In some cases I found some of their insights useful for pointing me in a certain direction, then I could go sniff it out myself, talk to people. The wonderful thing about a place like Costa Rica or even Nicaragua was that you had amazing access of people who were willing to talk to you. It was viewed as worthwhile to talk to you, it was socially enhancing to

talk to the people from the American embassy. So you could get around and you could have access to people. All you had to offer was a personality and maybe a free lunch every once in a while. You find yourself getting insights from folks who really know what was going on, which was superior, I think, to a lot that we were seeing in the intelligence field. Now certain things, we didn't know what was going on. For instance, in Nicaragua, maybe I just wasn't clued in, but I didn't think we had enough insights on the potential of the Sandinistas back in those days. As a political officer I could see that there was a lot of public unhappiness with the Somoza regime, but so far as intel on what individuals had gone to Cuba and trained and were now back in the mountains carrying out small guerrilla activity. Maybe there wasn't that much going on, maybe it was just rumors.

Q: For one thing, did you feel the hand of Oliver North at all?

GODARD: Well I was in Costa Rica. It seems like Ollie did come through one time. So he was operating in the area at that time. I was not aware of what he was really up to, if he was really up to anything at that stage. Later on is when he became more active. As I recall, he did come through Central America and stopped off in Costa Rica. I remember, he did. And I had a conversation with him.

Q: Was he somebody people were saying watch that guy or anything like that?

GODARD: Not in those days, I don't think anybody really knew who he was. He wasn't Ollie North back in those days.

Q: Do a little compare and contrasting of Frank McNeil and Curtin Winsor as ambassadors.

GODARD: Well, Curt was new. He had Latin American credentials and he knew a bit about the region and had academically studied it. He had a conservative take, pronounced conservative take, on the region. Curt also had a sort of messianic, felt a need to help Reagan be Reagan as he interpreted it, and that got him in a lot of trouble later on. He was

a close friend of Constantine Menges who I think led him astray sometimes as to what was really the policy in Washington. It reached the stage where Curt actually took on Secretary Shultz. So his mistakes in support were because of ideology I think. He was one of the nicest people I've ever worked for, had a wonderful family, and I enjoyed his friendship, but there were obviously problems.

Contrasting him with Frank McNeil, Curt was well-received by Costa Ricans because he had a lot of empathy for them and he was a real Costa Rica booster and his wife was very popular among Costa Ricans. Frank of course had the family connection and knew the political players from way back and was more a team player insofar as coordinating with Washington back home, rather than sort of feeling like he knew what the guidance was and went off on his own.

Q: What about dealing with the Costa Rican government? You seem to imply that they're easy to get along with.

GODARD: Yeah. They were very easy to work with. The foreign minister back in those days was a guy by the name of Gutierrez. I had a very close, warm relationship with him. Never had problems with access. He was, I thought, a very sort of visionary guy. Worked with other elements of foreign ministry, had no problems of access. Here again, as I said, people wanted to talk to the US embassy, wanted to talk to the chief of the political section. That traditionally had been a position of influence in the country, so I had no problems at all working with them.

Q: No security problems?

GODARD: I don't remember any security issues coming up during my time in Costa Rica. Things would happen like the assassination Eden Pastora where you were reminded that there was the capability out there to potentially target us. I don't remember incidents

that materialized. You always heard rumors about stuff in the making against any of our people.

Q: Then you left there in '84 and whither?

GODARD: Then I took off for Central American affairs. I was recruited by Craig Johnstone. He was a prot#g#e of Tom Enders. He didn't really have a Latin American background but developed, since he was so smart, on the ground expertise in the region. Brought in as director of Central American affairs and then went up to become deputy assistant secretary under Tom for working that area, Central America in particular. And I was recruited as the deputy director of Central American affairs.

Q: You did this from when to when?

GODARD: I got to Costa Rica in '82, I was there until '85, so I was deputy director for two years, '85 to '87 and I was the director of Central American affairs for a year until '88 when I went out to Chile.

Q: I think we can characterize this. This is the height of our interest in Central America. All of a sudden it's disappeared from the scene, but at this point it was somehow or another, particularly Nicaragua's considered a menace to Brownstone, Texas or something like that. Tell me about getting there. This must have been quite an operation wasn't it at the time? People were feeling the weight of the world on their shoulders.

GODARD: Yeah, the director of Central American affairs was Richard Malcolm. Later ambassador to Nicaragua and to Brazil. A very excellent Foreign Service officer. I was one of two deputies. It was a small office directorate where nothing happened in the past, suddenly, boom!, it was, as you say, the center of our foreign policy world. It had to staff up quickly. There had always been traditionally one deputy, and actually there were three deputies come to think of it. There was also an officer, former military man who was our

deputy for Panama, just to handle Panamanian affairs which had this tremendous military dimension because of the canal.

[Begin Tape 4, Side 1]

GODARD: So the office was suddenly expanding and a lot of that expansion happened before I got there. I was brought on board to be deputy director for particularly Nicaragua and Honduras and Costa Rica. There was another officer of the same rank who was doing El Salvador and Guatemala and Belize, and then there was an officer who did Panama. I had served in Nicaragua and I had served in Costa Rica so it was sort of natural for me. It's interesting how many of those young officers, and we had real talent working for us, those desk officers that we had back in those days, how they had gone on to do very well in the world of the Foreign Service. I can think of five right off the top of my head who made ambassador.

Q: Who were they?

GODARD: Bill Brownfield is now in Venezuela. Jim Cason right now is the head of our office in Havana, not ambassador but close to it. Bill Wood who is currently our ambassador in Colombia. Rose Likins who was a Honduras desk officer went on to become ambassador to El Salvador. There was one other who I forget, who went on to become ambassador. Well, then myself. I was deputy director back in those days. Rick of course went on to become ambassador to Nicaragua then went on to Brazil as ambassador.

My first job was to design the internal implementation of the Nicaragua humanitarian assistance office. Congress had authorized some funding for providing humanitarian assistance to the Nicaraguan resistance as it was called. According to this legislation it couldn't be turned over to AID or any of the traditional implementers of this kind of thing. The department had to write it itself. So I developed the executive order creating this new office and it was my introduction to Central American affairs. I did the thing deputy

directors do, which is what I'd heard on the reporting, and stay in touch with the embassies in Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Honduras. I had, as I said, excellent officers on each of the desks, and they just kept getting better as they came through too, the young officers. And I did the deputy director job. This is when Elliott Abrams was our assistant secretary. Worked very closely with Elliott getting the superior honor award for my efforts. Then offered me at the end of those two years the job of director, when Rick left to become ambassador in Nicaragua, he sent me up to become a director. Rick had recommended that. So I served for a year as the director of Central American affairs. Of course this is when all of the Iran Contra investigations were going on by that time, and I had to do my own testimony for the Special Prosecutor, Walsh. Maybe it was the congressional committee that was investigating, I did a deposition and it's in one of the books that they published. And then Walsh invited me, as they began their investigation on Ollie North's activities and so forth, invited me to brief them on. They needed somebody to brief the grand jury as they started out on just how they got there, how did all of this come about. And they selected me as somebody low enough down that I was unlikely to be indicted to brief the grand jury. So that was an interesting little additional responsibility.

Q: Let's take this non-lethal aid to the contras. At the time when you were drafting this, did you know that this had the potential of being a political powder cake, in other words, if all of a sudden you found yourself giving out rubber truncheons or hand grenades or something, was this something that was treated very, very carefully?

GODARD: Oh yeah, and the legislation was so crafted they recognized the possibilities for this blowing up in our faces, but I think there was a recognition that there was legitimate dissent against what was happening inside Nicaragua and a desire to help. So it was possible to, and this was with Democratic and Republican votes, they did finally get something through Congress. The implementation as much as anything I think it depended on the right people to administer it. The fellow who was selected to head up the Nicaraguan humanitarian assistance office was Robert Duemling who was a Foreign Service officer of great integrity. Again, an officer who had had no experience in Latin

America, but was a capable administrator and had no ideological axe to grind. He later after doing this assignment went on and became director of the Buildings Museum in Washington?

Q: Yes, he was. He had been ambassador to Suriname.

GODARD: He was a real straight arrow and it was recognized that this was a minefield if not done correctly. He was very careful about who got what and sorts of things that could be purchased with this money. And I think under extraordinarily difficult circumstances did an incredible job and I think he got due credit for that.

Q: Did you find yourself when you get up there, sometimes an organization or a group dealing with crises which we had, all hell was breaking loose in El Salvador and in Nicaragua with support coming from Honduras and Guatemala, that the organization dealing with this can lose sight of how the outside world would look at it and get too deeply committed to whatever their cause is and all of a sudden find themselves if not behind bars, in real trouble. Was there a feeling on your part when you got there, were people saying watch it?

GODARD: Not initially, but the flags started going up pretty soon after I arrived. Here again, my experience on the Hill was helpful, for one thing, keeping an eye on what those guys in there, fulfilling their oversight responsibilities, what it was that they were concerned about. And there was intense congressional interest in everything to do with our policy in Central America. I never had any opportunity I think to violate the law. I don't remember an opportunity for that. But I became aware very quickly that this organization which I had done the initial documentation for was dynamite if it wasn't done right and was very thankful that someone like Robert Duemling was in charge of that program. He was implementer of that project. There were warning signs and I was I think particularly attuned to them because of the congressional experience that I had had, and because of my experience in the region. I was still talking to the contacts that I had developed over the

years with the Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans, and keeping more or less abreast of what was happening on the ground down there. So I wasn't entirely dependent on just the intel reporting, whatever they were seeing in Washington.

Q: How would Elliott Abrams get into quite a bit of trouble over this thing. He was your boss, how did he operate?

GODARD: Very well as an administrator. He thought about the needs of those people. Tireless kind of guy who worked very long hours. He did very well by me. The policy was a difficult policy, but Elliott had different facets. The human rights policy that he pursued. Human rights was something that he took on initially in the department as the assistant secretary for that bureau. And there was a lot of thought that, oh that's the death of human rights as an element in foreign policy, but it certainly was not. And in a place like Chile where I served after my time in Central American affairs, the policy was dead on on human rights and dealing with the Pinochet government. Leaving aside the mistakes of the past. For that moment they were the right policies for helping that government toward a democratic solution. So I admired his ability. He was tied up with policy in Nicaragua that was very difficult. But he was also threading the needle on the human rights issues in El Salvador. Very, very complicated. In that atmosphere, everybody was screaming at us. On the one side, people saying, “Look, you're going to lose another country down the drain, the communists are at the doorstep,” and on the other side people saying, “These are the worst possible violators of human rights, you are sacrificing everything that the United States stands for. There were no heroes in the Salvadoran drama. There were all shades of gray, and maneuvering those waters was very, very difficult. I think we're fortunate it turned out as well as it did and God knows that we made a lot of mistakes. While I was on campus this past year I did some lecturing in Latin American studies and had an opportunity to revisit some of the literature that had been written, particularly on El Salvador. Very clearly, we made some wrong calls. But at the same time, the alternative, those were not social democrats in the hills, these were Maoist, really Trotskyite types who were not going to be gentle in implementing a democratic society, or a more socially

equitable society. They weren't to my mind in the best interests of the Salvadoran people coming to power at that particular time. Now at the same time the atrocities that the military committed were unconscionable. It's not a pretty history, quite frankly, and I'm glad we're through that and we're still suffering from the bruises and wounds from that period. But Central America I think is a better place today and a more democratic place than it would have been if we hadn't stuck by our guns in some cases. Compromised in other cases, maneuvered some very difficult waters.

Q: When you arrived there in '85, where stood the Iran Contra? Had Ollie North's operation been exposed and all of that, or did it happen...

GODARD: That happened while I was there. Ollie was at that point a participant in interagency meetings of one kind or another. His other activities were beyond my view. Q: But weren't you picking up stuff? Something was going on in Nicaragua?

GODARD: Yeah, and something was going on in terms of support for them. My impression was it was private, and I had no idea the degree of official participation in directing it.

Q: What happened when suddenly they had the initial exposure and then the hearings and all, what did this do, did this sort of change things?

GODARD: The real accounting happened after I left Central American affairs, so it was still sort of pending. As I left and during a good part of that year that I was director of Central American affairs it was the investigatory things. There was pretty much a stop put to any, as was later divulged, illegal activity, and there was a close look being taken of all that had happened under the table. But later on I was disillusioned and I looked back and tried to think of instances where I might have been used, but overall I don't feel like I was. I was not dumb, but maybe I was a little idealistic about how people played the game.

Q: Well this would be the first time that you were looking at it directly as opposed to from the Costa Rican perspective, at events in Nicaragua. What was your feeling about the Sandinistas, things they were doing?

GODARD: It was difficult for me to be completely objective. As I have mentioned, I was the contact for many of those opposition types under the Somoza government who later had joined in the revolution. There was no doubt in my mind that Nicaragua needed radical change, revolutionary change, in order to get rid of an oppressive military government. But watching sincere Nicaraguan patriots from the private sector, from Christian democratic, from social democratic parties, people who were real democrats, purged progressively, and even moderate Sandinistas like Eden Pastora who later proclaimed himself a kind of social democrat who had had no party affiliation to report, they had been Sandinistas. Seeing all those people cut out and only those who were dyed in the wool Marxist who were determined to by hook or crook completely transform the society into a communist system, and they were willing to work hand in hand with the Cubans and the Soviets back in those days, to try to spread their revolution through violence, was disillusioning about the revolutionary process. As I say, I had folks who were dedicated Nicaraguan patriots showing up on my doorstep when I was in Costa Rica who were forced out, who had to leave, go into exile, leave everything behind and seek a life in exile. People who had worked all of their political careers against the Somoza government who had tried to work democratic change in the country, and watching them cut out and the personal sacrifice that they were subjected to, I found disillusioning about the Sandinistas. Then later on when I went back to Nicaragua, I became a little more objective about it. They had become more of a nice party and there was a little bit of everything in the Sandinista party.

Q: What were we seeing from the Soviet and Cuban side during this time of '85 to '88? What were they doing then?

GODARD: At that stage they were supplying and vehemently denying that they were doing so to the Salvadoran insurgency. And doing it, we were detecting it by that time. In

Guatemala there were some connections as well, but the Cubans were actively involved in the arms process.

Q: Were we keeping almost a benign eye on Honduras and Guatemala? They had, correct me if I'm wrong, but these were military governments at the time.

GODARD: Yes.

Q: Were we saying, ok we've got a real problem down in Nicaragua, we're not going to be pushing democracy or anything else as long as these guys are taking kind of a stand.

GODARD: They were pretty sorry partners but they were all we had to work with back in those days. I guess the alternative was more terrible than they were. In the case of Guatemala there was a kind of a, we were close and then wide apart as they became more obviously violators of human rights and were killing the indigenous, we cut off assistance to the Guatemalans. It was off and on. But the Hondurans, we were close to them throughout and we were trying to influence them toward a more benign human rights policy. But it was a society where military domination had existed for so long and such a brutal variation of it that it took a while to exorcise that. But it did, finally with the successive administration it got better and better with our influence. I'm not sure we could have moved them faster than that if we just cut them off. In the case of El Salvador, if we had cut them off I think they would have gone under because the other side was giving them the wherewithal to impose a military solution there. It would have been a short time thereafter before the Hondurans went over if we cut them off. So our options were lousy both ways, and undoubtedly we made some mistakes and it wasn't a pretty thing to live through, but overall I think we made more right decisions than wrong.

Q: Did you get under fire or did you find yourself having to deal with, I term it the glitterati, these were the Hollywood stars, the nuns, the guitar-playing, I'm not trying to

denigrate them but I mean it gives a feel for it, you might say the left-wing of the American intellectual/cultural pop culture had gotten sort of in bed with the Sandinistas.

GODARD: At this stage I don't think so far as prominent members of those groups, none of them stick in my mind. Later on when I came back to Nicaragua I met a few of them when I was chief of the mission in particular. But in those days I talked to a lot of sincere Americans who were bitterly opposed to our policy both here in Washington and then down in Costa Rica in particular we did briefings. Church groups would come. This would sort of be part of their tour. They were in many cases very sympathetic to the FSLN and they would see certain things in Nicaragua and then they'd be brought over to Costa Rica to get another viewpoint and see another side of it. They would often line up presentation at the U.S. embassy. So I got a chance to talk to those people and they were very vocal, didn't always get a chance to finish my spiel, but a good deal of contact from their point of view.

Q: Tony Quainton was ambassador in Nicaragua around this time. And he talked about how at one point a group of American nuns came and they said, can we hold hands and have a circle and pray? And how could he refuse that. And they would pray against the government of the United States and there he was, trapped.

GODARD: Yes, I've got similar kinds of situations. There were lots of activist groups, especially church groups and sincere honest people who were bitterly opposed to what we were doing.

Q: When you were dealing with Latin America at this point, was liberation theology a theme or had this come and gone by this time? Whatever that was.

GODARD: Well it was sort of a factor. There were a few isolated voices of liberation theology and it was an element in the Sandinista revolution. There were a bunch of Jesuits out at the University of Central America on campus in Managua who were self-professed I think liberation theologists. There were a number of priests for instance in the FSLN

cabinet. At least three as I recall, the Cardinale brothers and then Padre Bosquoto. I think all three were Jesuits. They were liberation theology. It's not my sense that they had a large following as a separate element of the FSLN. The religious leader in Nicaragua itself was without question was Cardinal Obando Bravo, and he had come by his credentials as a figure of opposition to Somoza very legitimately and was widely respected, and had very troubled relations with the FSLN later on. They had no use at all for liberation theologists.

Q: What was your evaluation of particularly the Ortega brothers and all, where were they coming from?

GODARD: They were ideologically Marxist. Very almost technocratic in their approach to that and they were kind of bloodless in their approach to politics. Intense, very serious, both of them. Talented, and had a good understanding of the makeup of Nicaraguan society. They didn't in my mind show well so far as gaining a wider audience. Daniel sort of improved his image to the extent he could to do his road show in some other countries. I don't think he ever had much resonance. The other brother Humberto Ortega was a military guy. In some ways he was still around when I came back to Nicaragua later on. He was less ideological, a little less. And he became more of a military man. By that I mean less of a politician and more of a figure thinking about the institution of the military. And in part I think it was because of his work, the professionalism he developed in the officer corps that made it possible for them to do a peaceful transition. The army is still essentially Sandinista-led, old members of the FSLN army. And they have pretty much abided by their oath of loyalty to the governments which have succeeded Daniel Ortega. So I see that difference. Daniel Ortega I think was very much a power monger. Very much thrived on the ability to control events, and I think it was a very frustrating transition for him, to suddenly find himself in the opposition, playing that role. That said, he has the strength of character to do that. Rather than leading the FSLN into some sort of disastrous confrontation, he had the strength of character to recognize that he'd live to fight another day and carry forward. Both of the brothers with the burden of the incumbency matured with time and became more pragmatic I think. They were young when they first came to

power, leading that revolution. Very often happens with dramatic young revolutionaries who are suddenly thrust into position. They try very quickly to transform a society, learn that that was not possible, and actually became fixtures of the democratic system in opposition.

Q: When you left the Central American job in '88, did you see an end game at that point?

GODARD: At that time, I don't know that I saw an end game. Later on, the election occurred and the Sandinistas were turned out of power by democratic election in Nicaragua. In El Salvador, I think by that time we had kind of turned a corner where there were indications that people were coming into office who were not human rights abusers who offered some promise of peaceful change in El Salvador. But it was all tentative. I didn't know, at that stage anyway, how it was going to turn out.

Q: Did you feel that the Contra movement was a potential winner?

GODARD: I don't know that I ever thought it was a winner. Folks who were supportive, but I never imagined them marching into Managua and taking over. They were a legitimate force that were fighting for their rights. These were peasants; they weren't disillusioned university students or whatever. These were peasants who had in many cases lost their land or had gripes about how the society was being changed. And these were Mosquito Indians, they had their villages burned. The leaders, some of them were from questionable background, but the actual troops were in opposition for real personal reasons.

Q: Well then I think this is probably a good place to stop and we'll pick this up in '88 when you were off to Chile, is that right?

GODARD: That's correct.

Q: Today is the 30th of November, 2004. Ron, you were in Chile from when to when?

GODARD: Let's see, I began my tour there in 1988, somewhere I guess in 1988 and I was there until summer of '91.

Q: What was your job?

GODARD: I was political counselor in Chile.

Q: Let's talk about again when you arrived 1988, what was the political situation, the economic situation, and then relations between the United States and Chile.

GODARD: Well, the economy was going great guns. Chile under Pinochet, after some disastrous efforts at state-managed economies and so forth, he had latched onto a brilliant economist. Hern#n B#chi created the Chilean economic miracle.

Q: These are the so-called Chicago boys?

GODARD: That's right, the Chicago boys. It worked in Chile. It was not without great cost. There was a lot of tightening their belts and so-forth, but it's an economy that reacted very well to that model. There's lots of enterprising people, highly educated. Chileans are interesting in Latin America. They are a people who save money, so there was accumulated capital in the country as well. So economically they were quite well-off, but they'd been under the Pinochet dictatorship by that time for about 17 years. When I arrived in the country there was already a campaign underway, or preparation for a plebiscite that was supposed to either extend Pinochet's presidency for another, I forget how much it was but I think it was something like seven years I think. Or no, that there would be free elections. So the status of our relations at that point were correct I guess you'd call it because our attitude toward the Pinochet government as it hung on longer and longer had gotten more and more frosty, but still correct. We certainly had regular contact with ministers at all levels. At the same time, we had initiated a policy of helping those that were working toward the democratic transition in Chile. We had put some money where our mouth was in that country and were financing NGOs (non-governmental organizations)

that were working to prepare people for the elections. There was a number of human rights groups that were quite active in protecting people from the oppression of the Chilean government. By that time, most of the atrocities that we read about now, torture and whatever, were behind the Pinochet regime. It was now a pretty peaceful period. He was sort of lauded, especially in conservative circles, because of the economic progress that they'd made, as a model for Latin America at that point. There were some who felt like the kind of economic reforms that had happened in Chile couldn't happen in a democracy, just too chaotic in Latin America, and you need an iron hand to impose a kind of economic discipline. But there was a plebiscite scheduled for October of 1988 as a matter of fact, and I arrived there. Harry Barnes was our ambassador. Very accomplished diplomat who had contacts across the political spectrum, and it was a pretty broad political spectrum in Chile, ranging from Maoist to Pinochet crypto-fascists in some places. My job as the political counselor was one of developing particular contacts with the opposition. It was the DCM and the ambassador who remained high level contact with the ministers and the presidency. We had at that time, limited contact with Pinochet himself. It was limited. He wasn't too happy about the work we were doing with human rights groups and those who were supporting.

Q: Was this a two sided thing? Were we trying to not have too much contact with him too?

GODARD: With Pinochet? Well, I think the embassy's job is to maintain contact with all the sectors and we were certainly trying to do that. There had been a tremendous expansion in our trade with Chile, so there were economic factors there. There were issues in business that we had to conduct with the government, in addition to maintaining contact with the opposition and supporting those NGOs that were working toward the democratic transition.

So we came to the day of the plebiscite and there were moments of crisis and so forth, and I sort of threw myself into learning as much as I could about the electoral process. I traveled quite a bit, went to a number of places. Once you got away from the capital, you

found the same thing. There was an upswell of opposition sentiment. But a great deal of uneasiness about whether it would be a really fair election, and whether people were safe to vote in the election, because it was a yes or no plebiscite. They weren't voting on anybody else. They were just voting on Pinochet, whether he would continue in office or not. The long and short of it is Pinochet lost in that plebiscite, much to his utter surprise. Up to the very end, I think he believed that he would win.

Q: This happens a surprising number of times, when especially a dictatorship or a totalitarian government decides, let's turn it over to the people, we'll still get it. Obviously they were reading the tea leaves wrong. Do you have any idea what...

[Begin Tape 4, Side 2]

GODARD: ...nature of the government. They're not going to spill their guts about how they really feel when this stranger comes up and takes down the data on their opinions. So the polls, because of who the pollsters were in some cases, and they were recognized as sympathetic to Pinochet, were getting the wrong kinds of information because they were feeding that back. And too, I think they had confidence in the intimidation factor, that people weren't going to have the guts to turn him out. Working for him too, the business community had done well under Pinochet, and they were saying that we're behind you and so he was hearing all these warm and encouraging sounds around him. Dictators don't normally have a really good ear of what the opinions of the man on the street is. And he was wrong.

Q: What were you getting?

GODARD: We were talking to the opposition, and the opposition was telling us the opposite. They were doing their polling and they were talking to people in the villages. You also had good contacts with the church that were financing a group that did human rights work that was sponsored by one of the bishops. So we had very good contacts, and we always visited the bishops in the various provinces, and they would tell us where the wind

was blowing. So for my travels around, and from what I was hearing in Santiago from the mainline politicians, we felt like there was preponderant opinion against continuation of this government. But we were not confident in the honesty of the process, and so we were encouraging as many observers as we could get in the country to come in. Internationals, they would come in. Of course Pinochet's government was restrictive on that. Who they were, where they'd been. But because he had received international accolades for all of this economic progress, he really was looking for international acceptance as well. So he was willing to allow some international participation. So for that election we had observers from any number of groups.

Q: Did Jimmy Carter come?

GODARD: No, Jimmy Carter I don't think would have been allowed in. But there were people there from the National Endowment for Democracy. They had a sizeable group coming in for the plebiscite. There were groups in Chile that they had been working with over the years. And they weren't the only ones. There were European groups and whatever, observing.

Q: What about how you operated the political section? I've heard both things mentioned about when you've got an election coming up, particularly one which is kind of important. There's a tendency to say, oh we got it right, and be able to go in and say we think so-and-so's going to win. You know, pat on your back, but in many ways the more professional one is, you figure out if A wins you do this, if B wins it means this for American foreign policy. And the prediction in a way is kind of the icing on the cake.

GODARD: Well, we did that sort of analysis. We knew pretty much what to expect from Pinochet. He'd been in the government for 17 years, and we knew what that relationship was going to look like. We didn't see necessarily, if he had won, a deterioration in the human rights situation. It could have gotten worse, but not necessarily. But the main point we were making was that if the other side won, the coalition of parties ranging from

social democrats, socialists, Christian democrats, that range. As I recall, there wasn't a conservative party as such that was part of the coalition. But in our analysis we were predicting also good relations with those people, because I knew the kinds of views they held in economy and government. They'd been out of government of course, for a long time. They were very careful in their campaigning and in their conversations with others, emphasized that actually, of course, we had made some economic progress under Pinochet, and we're quite anxious to preserve and build on that. We want to open the society up more. So we were pretty confident that we could live with the opposition. But at this election of course, it wasn't really Pinochet or the opposition. It was whether or not Pinochet, in this particular election. Later on, there was a clear choice. Pinochet didn't run after that. This was about a year later, there was an election, and Hern#n B#chi, actually the man who was the Chicago boy who designed this economic miracle in Chile, was the candidate of the right. And there was Pinochet groups and other conservative right wing groups in the country which supported him. There were a couple of them, Renovaci#n Nacional and then there was a more conservative group. Both of which are still very prominent in the political scene, very active. The opposition put up a Christian democrat leader, Patricio Aylwin, and Aylwin won the election. Aylwin was the choice between the right and the left.

Q: We've come to the election or the referendum. When you arrived there, at one point, Chile had attracted the events there and become quite a cause from many sorts of people including, I like the term, the glitterati, the movie stars, rock stars, and others, for good reason. And then you have the movie Missing, about a young man who was American who was apparently killed during the initial coup, and then a little later, or maybe before, the Letelier case.

GODARD: The Letelier case was before.

Q: Maybe so, but that was simmering. How about all these movements that were going on, how were they by the time you got there?

GODARD: Well of course, the Letelier case was very much alive and we were pursuing it with Pinochet in our day. There were investigations still going on, and just keep hammering away at it. There were limits as to how much you could find out so long as Pinochet was in power. But that had cast a shadow over the relationship in addition to his human rights record. The fact that he had murdered somebody on the streets of Washington was not taken too well in the halls of government in the United States or by the public. I guess I had been aware way back about the number of exiles of Chilean origin coming out of this period. They were all over the hemisphere and they were always sort of intelligentsia, the academics in particular. In almost any country I served there were Chileans who had gone into exile who were at the universities in the countries, in America, they were all over the world. It was an attractive cause, the plebiscite of the no, and they attracted a lot of attention. Ted Kennedy came down after the plebiscite. He had come down during the Pinochet period at one time to make a point, and his movements were restricted and so forth. It was not a pleasant visit. This was before I came on the scene. We had a good number of congresspeople who came down during this period. Senator Leahy and Senator Lugar came down.

Q: These were people basically from the more liberal side of both Democratic and Republican spectrums.

GODARD: Right. They were all very interested in the process. I can't remember at which stage they came to the country. Kennedy I recall came down for the inauguration actually, Ted Kennedy did, for his second trip. The glitterati were, at least during the Pinochet years when I was there, were not in country. They wouldn't have been welcome particularly. We were quite aware that because of what had gone on before with the overthrow of Salvador Allende and just the prospect of people power being expressed in terms of finally overthrowing what had become a worldwide symbol of right-wing repression, military dictatorship. Was something that got a lot of attention. Sort of like the solidarity movement in Poland. I remember the posters were very much people power things, really

lots of flowers and beautiful posters that said “No.” That was the message. That was what everybody was voting, they were voting no to extending Pinochet's government. It was a very special period and I count myself very fortunate to have been there and have been a part of it.

Q: What were we seeing when the actual plebiscite was held?

GODARD: Well, I had been put in charge of a monitoring exercise inside the embassy. Everybody in the embassy participated and we had visitors down who were also incorporated into our observer operation. Other embassies were doing something similar as well, but I dispatched officers to all of the regions. They were military regions to begin with but then they became accepted nomenclature for certain geographic regions of the country. So I had people in every region the length of the country, there's not a lot of breadth there, but the length of the country. We had people in every region, every major city. And they were calling in information to us. We set up a command center in the embassy and we were reporting back situation reports every hour out of the embassy. I was in charge of the command center and we'd get these phone reports in from people from Valparaiso, Vi#a del Mar, or Concepci#n down south or from up north, and we would collate all this into a consolidated report as to what was happening, what events were going on, and what local chatter was about.. because what we had done was we had people travel to these regions beforehand to establish personal contacts, find out where were the information centers, how would you find out what was going on, call on the local party chiefs, call on the local bishop, call on the local labor leaders. Put your lines out so you can find out what's going on on election day. In some of the outposts, there were great concern that people would just stay away from the polls, that they'd be too afraid to come. As a country, they hadn't had free elections recently. They'd had plebiscites before that were pretty much tightly controlled and limited things during the Pinochet period. But this was of course a really free election. The trends were pretty clear, but it went into the night, and at one point they stopped the count. It had become clear which way it was going. It was at that stage the generals were, “Look this isn't going to be what we thought it was

going to be. Our polls were wrong." At that point is when our ambassadors swung into action and went to see the right people in the government and made clear that there would be consequences if they did try to fake this and steal the election. To his credit, Pinochet finally accepted defeat.

Q: Somebody described a thing where, I think it was the head of the air force, was hit by the press when he was going to a conference, and he said, "Well, looks like we lost." And that kind of broke the dam in a way.

GODARD: That's the way everything was going. And Matte was one of the people that our ambassador had seen. Once Matte, as the leader of the air force, declared himself and that's how it was interpreted, the fact that Pinochet was able to maintain himself in power all those years, was a factor of maintaining unity among the service commanders. Their nightmare was the air force against the army or navy. That's when it became clear that it really was going to be accepted.

Q: Was Matte seen by us as somebody who was you might say more liberal, honest...

GODARD: Some of them were kind of hard to read, like the guy who was the head of the Carabineros for instance. The Carabineros are the national police. It's a military organization, organized along military lines, but it's functions are police, but they also have shock troops when they were handling civil disturbances and stuff like that. They were very much a part of the junta, the military. The guy in the navy was always very conservative, very right wing. Then of course, the army commander was loyal to Pinochet, so Matte was very much in that group as you could say, he was a liberal.

Q: Were things beginning to get tense? For example, I always think of certain points in Chile before where all the housewives came out and started pounding on their kitchen utensils. Was this beginning to happen?

GODARD: Yeah, I can't remember if it was afterwards or during the lead up to, what they call them is the cassaroles(?), casserole pans. They'd bang their pans. I just can't remember what the cause was, but there were a couple of them where you could hear these pans banging all over the city. Just go out in the backyard and you could hear the pans banging all over the city. I don't know if that's what it would have been what it was for, the opposition, because they were limited in how many public demonstrations they could have. Campaigning during preparations for the plebiscite was really limited on television. I remember I think it was 30 minutes for the opposition and supposedly 30 minutes for the government. Of course, national news was all government, covering what Pinochet had done that day or whatever. But they did give the opposition and the other side a chance to express their views.

Q: Were there any cases at this period of wooly bullies in the right wing getting out there and running around?

GODARD: Out in the countryside there were incidents like that, but they were limited. They weren't pervasive. Our analysis in general was that it had been a fair and honest plebiscite.

Q: Correct me if I'm wrong, but during the Allende time, he was not a benign person either. There was very definite left wing crypto-communist, or whatever you want to call it, movement. In Allende's organization, was he named a controbid(?) or not?

GODARD: He was named a martyr, especially for the left. Christian democrats, of course, had opposed Allende. They were the ones that he beat in the election. But certainly on the left he was a figure of reverence. Christian democrats had no use for him in the opposition, but they overcame that. Managed to work together to bring down Pinochet.

Q: How about the students?

GODARD: Students flared up every once in a while, and there were incidents while I was in Chile. In fact, I had an intern who was out on the streets one time covering the elections, and he got chased by what's called a guanaco. A guanaco is sort of like a llama but it's a wild animal and it spits like a llama does, or a camel does. These were water guns that they had on these armored cars, and they were chasing this guy around the square. They'd spray them to knock them down or push them back and so forth, breaking up this student demonstration. He was just watching and suddenly his group got targeted by it. That sort of thing went on all the time. At one point we had as a visitor to one of the labor groups that we worked with, Bill Doherty was the head of the AIFLD, the American Institute for Free Labor and Development, AFL-CIO organization. Very proud of the fact that he got sprayed, he got pushed down at one point. He was out there with working people, carrying their placards, the police came in and broke it up. He was very honored to have been part of that. Those sorts of things happened all the time. The carabineros were rough guys, and they had to maintain order in that country with a steel fist.

At one point, I guess it was a reporter was killed. There were several foreign reporters injured and pushed back because they were trying to cover the events of the election and the fact that Pinochet had lost had made them pretty surly anyway, and it got pretty violent.

Q: When you were down to the embassy did you find there was any sort of division, sort of economic section was saying, gee we have a good thing going here, great economy; and the political section was saying, this government is violating human rights. Did you find that or was it pretty much a united..

GODARD: There was some of that, in degrees. All of us admired the economic progress. That's been borne out. Chile's now become sort of a model, the opposition has taken up those, just as they said they were going to do back then, and then build on what Pinochet had accomplished. I don't remember anyone in the embassy being particularly sympathetic to Pinochet himself. He'd just been around too long. There were too many horrible stories that we had heard, what had happened during the bad days of the dictatorship, and then

every once in a while these sort of things flared up again. The ambassador followed a very correct course in encouraging a free and fair election, and trying to push for democracy there. I think we were all behind him. We all wanted to see a return to democracy, and that meant Pinochet stepping aside.

Q: After the election, what happened?

GODARD: As provided for, there were elections called. They were a year later. The candidate of the opposition was Patricio Aylwin, and the candidate of the right wing, there was a lot of conjecture that Pinochet would run himself, but he didn't put himself up for rejection again, and instead backed Hern#n B#chi and those forces around him. B#chi being the guy who'd been his minister of economy, brilliant economist, and a very young man. Not exactly who you would expect to be the candidate of the right wing. He had a kind of Beatles haircut that cut his head like this, blondish hair, handsome fella, but he lost in the election. It was a hard fought election, it was close, and the thing that was very interesting for me as a political officer to watch and trying to analyze what was going to happen in that election, was how the congress would turn out. The constitution had been written by Pinochet. Among other things, it gave him a position as senator for life. It had a number of other senators who were named by the presidency who were installed in the senate. I did the numbers and I also did the calculations in each province of how we expected the vote to turn out. So I was able to predict that the opposition in that election would win. We expected Aylwin to win and we expected the opposition to win the majority probably in the chamber of deputies, the lower chamber, but it would be very close in the senate and the right would have a safe majority in the senate. So it wasn't going to be a radical change in legislative activity or anything like that. We had such good contacts during the plebiscite period. These were built up by people who were, as you can imagine, when you worry about whether or not the election is going to be stolen, the folks you want to inform are the foreign embassies. Keep them informed. So we had excellent contacts in the country going into the election. We did a pretty good job of calling that election. It was gratifying for me, because as political counselor I was the primary contact of opposition

forces. Now suddenly I saw coming into cabinet positions, the guys who had been my contacts before. The foreign minister I knew quite well, the minister of the interior, all of the major ministries I had a relationship dating back to from when I had arrived. In all, it was a wonderful night, the night that the plebiscite of the no. To see that happening, to see the joy you had shortly after it came about, and then watching many of those exiles we were talking about. Chileans coming home from Sweden, or coming home from Costa Rica, or coming home from South Africa, wherever they were. Heading back to Chile. Very gratifying.

Q: Did you find as so often happens in a country where an embassy, your social life, you can't help but getting involved with people who are doing very well financially in the country. It's true of the United States, anywhere. These are the people throwing the parties, can I ask you over? And usually they are pretty conservative. Did you find that there were tensions there of hostesses coming up to you, how can you be supporting these left-wing hoodlums or something like that?

GODARD: There was some of that. You came across that to a certain extent. I remember being bearded at one point by a lady at a social function who just couldn't believe what we were doing. We should know that salvation of this country, Allende was taking us over the edge and it's only because of the grace of God, Augusto Pinochet, where we are now. Yeah, we had that sort of thing happen. Our social functions, we tried to make them, when we were hosting at any rate, as eclectic as possible because there were so many different political connections there. But we had a lot of contact with the conservative types, and got lectured too, frequently. I remember very long sessions when I went to provinces because when I went out there I talked to the local conservative party leaders as well. They were especially vociferous in letting me know that we were wrong-headed.

Q: What about the spirit of Allende? I think for professional diplomats he was sort of the darling of the left in the United States. But for professional diplomats this man represented a leftist danger. Not necessarily communist, but I mean he was organizing his own almost

military force and everything else. Considering how he got into power and the three-way election and he sort of squeaked in that way, what he was doing was kind of a threat to us. Was that whole idea hanging on, that we weren't that enamored by Allende?

GODARD: Well, Allende wasn't much of a factor. Politics had moved on by the time I got there, and the issues were drawn along different lines. His ideas were pretty much a radical solution for Chilean society. Radical revolution was pretty much not in the cards. You had your rightists in reaction to the leftist radical approach. And Chileans, as a result, were sort of rushed to the center, and that option was not there. Things happened like dedicating a statue to Salvador Allende, which of course you never would have had during the Pinochet period, while I was there. Everyone of consequence in the political realm went to that. As I recall, the president I think was there. But that option really had no resonance among the Chilean electorate. The way they had beat Pinochet of course, was forming, I can't remember the exact name of the organization, but that's persisting. And it includes, it's a broad tent, and they have the more leftist socialist party people, Allende's party, and then they have Christian democrats. Some Christian democrats are very conservative, but they all stay within the same organization. You know, they've alternated. Patricio Aylwin was chosen as the first president under that group, and now Ricardo Lagos who is a social democrat was then the successor. I don't know who would be next, but there will be discussion among them, and they bounce back and forth between those two large segments of the coalition.

Q: Did we find ourselves up against issues or concerns when the election came? This was about halfway through your time there. Did things change?

GODARD: A lot of uncertainty, because it was still a closely divided nation. The election itself between B#chi and Aylwin, as I say, we pretty well predicted that Aylwin was going to win. But it wasn't that big a margin. There were really no contentious issues for us. The Letelier case persisted and later on, as we had the sources come forward, we developed a

stronger case against the head of their intelligence service and ended up getting some of the culprits for that. Relations were very good under Aylwin. The president came down.

Q: This would have been George Bush.

GODARD: George H. W. Bush. And we had an excellent visit. State visit with a big dinner at La Moneda palace and all of this. A real celebration in Chilean democracy. I must say, that's when I was first exposed to Bush's special affection toward the diplomatic corps, for the Foreign Service. We sometimes forget, he was a diplomat himself. He was at the UN and he was also in China. He arranged a special event at the embassy where all the families could get together with him and his wife. It was a very nice touch.

Q: While all this is going on, what about relations? Was there any change or any problems of relations, particularly with Argentina, but Bolivia and Peru and all that?

GODARD: During my tenure there, during the Pinochet period there was something like 17 territorial disputes. As you can imagine, that long border between Argentina and Chile, there were about 17 pockets of dispute. Some of them were resolved during the Pinochet period. During Aylwin's administration they had two democracies, one on either side of the Andes. They really went after it and they finally resolved all of those issues between the two countries. While I was in Argentina later on, they finally dissolved the last one. The issues with Bolivia continue. Later on I went to work in the U.S. delegation to the OAS (Organization of American States) and found that every year, Bolivia would insist that on the agenda for the general assembly, they had a general assembly for the Organization of American States, was a review or attempt to open up the issue of Bolivia's being denied access to the sea. Chile and Bolivia had a war in the 19th Century, War of the Pacific. Bolivia lost along with their ally Peru, and Chile annexed what is now the northern party of Chile and one small province from Peru. And there was a treaty, substantively a treaty, signed that was ratified by the Bolivian congress of that time. As far as the Chileans are

concerned it's over, and of course the Bolivians make the case that there were extenuating circumstances, that there were particular political...

Q: Ok, but how did this residue of the War of the Pacific come out? Let's stick to the time you were in Chile.

GODARD: Nothing really came out. It was a sort of a pro forma process every year, brought up. Occasionally it becomes an issue internally. In Bolivia in particular, just recently as a matter of fact, they raised it. The time I was there I don't recall it being a really neuralgic point between the two countries. The primary foreign policy question was though, those initiatives with the Argentines.

Q: From the Chilean perspective as you saw it, how did the Chileans think about the Argentineans? What did they think about it? It sounds like almost two different people, I mean really different. One says and the other does.

GODARD: Chileans are very isolated. Those mountains are huge around them. And so, they're different. They speak Spanish of course, but it has a different accent, a different lilt and so forth. They have special words that you don't find in other countries. Just a unique people. They're very different from the Argentines. The Argentines are a nation primarily of immigrants. Chile is an amalgamation of the Spanish and the Indian population there. The history is kind of interesting in Chile. The Spaniards poured thousands of troops into that country to fight the Araucano Indians in the south. It was the longest going war in the hemisphere. So those troops, many of them stayed on and has been the basis, intermarrying with the indigenous population. That's the Chilean population. Whereas in Argentina they pretty well wiped out the Indians. Sort of the U.S. model. It was actually genocide. So it's Italians, and others, more recent arrivals who have populated Argentina. So they are different folks in many ways. So far as their attitudes toward each other...

[Begin Tape 5, Side 1]

GODARD: I was comparing the Chileans and the Argentines. So far as their attitudes toward each other, the Chileans of course being the little guy, were always very suspicious of Argentina. As you know, they came very close to war over some pieces of ice down in the south. Where the line should be drawn at Antarctica, where they actually got the Pope involved as a mediator and settled those sorts of things. That's why it was very important once they both got democracies, to settle all of those border enclaves that still remained. They arranged to have military governments at the same time, and they got along in terms of repressing their own people on both sides of the border. Collaborated, share intelligence about leftist activities, etcetera. They were fortunate in that about the same time that the Pinochet dictatorship was ending, there were democratic elections in Argentina as well. You had two democracies looking across the Andes that met each other, and you had an opportunity for them to actually cooperate in solving those border problems. More importantly, working together economically. There's been an awful lot of trans-border development along the border there. Chilean industry will depend on energy sources on the Argentine side, and there will be the same sort of interdependency in other parts of the country. So now, they're very good neighbors I think, and the old disputes of the past are of the past, and I don't see them being revived.

Q: Internally, how were the indigenous Indian native population? What was the situation when you were there?

GODARD: In Chile, the numbers in the south in particular, the Araucanos still a large Indian population. They don't call them reservations, but there are large communities of indigenous populations in the south. They were not at that point particularly organized as a political force. I'm sure that's changed now. They had their community organizations that were distinct from the political structure of the rest of the country, but I've seen them mentioning in negotiations that will be going on now on indigenous rights in both the UN and in the OAS. They're one of those groups that are much more active now.

Q: Was the Shining Path a movement in Peru? Did that translate at all?

GODARD: It had its roots in the impoverished Andean areas, and never had any impact in either Argentina or Chile.

Q: What was the embassy, in particular the political section, concerned with after democracy came? Were there any issues?

GODARD: Well, it seems like when we have no problems we come up with new problems. One of the most profitable industries back in those days of commerce between the United States and Chile was the export of table grapes. Their seasons are exactly the opposite, so when California grapes were not available, they could put Chilean grapes on the table at a very reasonable price in the United States. It was a huge, growing market. One time, while I was the duty officer, I got a call indicating that they had found evidence of tampering with some Chilean grapes and did some test of those grapes, and they discovered traces of arsenic in those grapes. Well, the FDA doesn't take any chances when something like that happens, and we shut them down. We pulled all of the Chilean grapes, which by that time the distribution system was very widespread across the United States. Millions and millions of dollars were lost in grapes that were en route, or had already arrived or were on the supermarket shelves in the United States. The Chileans were furious. This was a budding industry that they were very proud of. It was one of their most profitable, it employed a lot of people. And they suddenly saw the bottom fall out of it because of one or two grapes. Who did it was never proven. I got the story a little ahead of itself, but what happened was we received a threatening call at the embassy, saying they were going to do something like this. And then, when the FDA examined some of these grapes, they found traces of arsenic. No one was found to be responsible for this call. We tried to trace it, we did everything possible to find out who this food terrorist was. But nothing further was developed. Those two or three grapes that had been tinged were all that there ever was. We did tests on lots more in the United States, but we kept in place this prohibition against importation because of that threat. It was rescinded later on, but

the Chilean producers felt like they had been horribly robbed without sufficient cause. They didn't really believe the evidence of the arsenic anyway. There were all kinds of explanations for chemical reactions there. It sounds like this, it could have been something else. Who knows. It's just one of those things that I've never seen complete explanation for. It caused a real problem in our relationship and it lingered on for years after. In court they brought lawsuits trying to get compensation for all of these losses. I think we had finally put it to rest, but it was a big deal. I remember Ricardo Claro was a businessman who was very much into this grape exporting business. He was also the president of the Chilean-U.S. binational center, the cultural center. Became a vociferous critic of the United States. He also happened to have a TV program which he also used to slam us at every opportunity. Back in those days, I don't know, this attitude may have changed by now, but it made for some difficult times.

Q: I had a long interview with Tony Gillespie who is our ambassador there who said that all of a sudden, grapes became the center of his world.

GODARD: Poor Tony. When he came in, it was a very interesting relationship. An opportunity for the new ambassador to develop this new democratic ally, and a partnership for working a lot of questions in and *bang* there's grapes, grapes took the rug out from under us.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover about this Chilean time do you think?

GODARD: I can't think of anything. Just as a general comment, it was one of the most gratifying tours in my life. I loved the country, but it was also professionally just really rewarding in that the policy was ripe and it gave you an opportunity to share in a very special moment in history of a very attractive country and very attractive people.

Q: Were we pressing to clean up some of the human rights cases?

GODARD: The Chileans were. We didn't have to press because that was a huge issue for the new government. They sort of pioneered the for-South Africa approach. Having this truth and forgiveness kind of, exposing what had happened, there was a commission that had hearings and they had depositions from all of the victims who had suffered during the Pinochet times. These were published and then, where it was appropriate, compensation was paid. Lagos is now talking about compensating torture victims. We didn't really have to push that process. Initially there was an amnesty issued, but now the courts are overturning that in Chile. The Chileans have their own human rights situation very much in hand I think. They're still, as you can imagine, haunted by it, and still trying to resolve some of the shadows that were cast over the future. That's a long term process, but it wasn't a bilateral issue.

Q: In '91 whither?

GODARD: In '91 I got a call offering me a job from Harry Shlaudeman, someone I admired way back. He was our ambassador in Brazil. At that time he had retired as ambassador to Brazil and been our assistant secretary for Latin America and been ambassador elsewhere. George H. W. Bush had prevailed upon him to come out of retirement and become our ambassador to Nicaragua after the victory in the election there of Violeta Chamorro. Ambassador Shlaudeman, because of my extensive experience in Central America, I guess some of my friends up there recommended me to be his DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) and I decided to do that. So my tour in Chile, while I was having a great time there, it was too good an opportunity to resist. I was sent from Chile to be Deputy Chief of Mission in Nicaragua.

Q: You did that from '91 to when?

GODARD: I was there two and a half years I think it was. So it was '91, '92 I guess '93 is when I went into Argentina.

Q: When you got there in '91, what was the situation?

GODARD: The president at the moment was Violeta Chamorro who was the widow of the man who was a friend of mine, Jose Joaquin Chamorro from my previous tour. She had not been an active politician before her husband's death. Very much a homemaker, raising the children and so forth. But became very active in politics. In fact, after the revolution, after Somoza was overthrown, she had been a member of the initial junta that was pulled together to govern the country. She had been, and they still own the paper, she'd been the chief editor of La Prensa which was the opposition newspaper. It was opposition under Somoza and it continued to be opposition under the Sandinistas. It was the anti-Sandinista voice.

Her government was headed up by her son-in-law, Antonio Lacayo, and the country was deeply divided. There was a majority that could sort of be cobbled together of non-Sandinista parties and then there was a large bloc of votes in the national assembly controlled by the FSLN. Tough to get legislation through of any kind. Very difficult to govern. We were trying to be as supportive as possible of Chamorro after difficulties with the FSLN government, and wanted to first see her be successful and for Nicaragua to continue with the democratic process, so it was a very challenging assignment. We had a large AID program there. One of the larger in the area. Reconciliation was a big issue. Out in the rural areas of the country there was still violence going on between Sandinista and non-Sandinista community groups. We promoted disarmament as much as possible. Getting people to just turn in their guns because during the previous years the Soviets had poured all kinds of guns in there and of course contras were also getting guns. Everybody seemed to have a gun. So there were a lot of ceremonies, I remember attending at least a couple where Violeta Chamorro would preside over the destruction of weapons that had been turned in and had been purchased. Very much a process of demobilization to a certain extent. Getting the two sides to stand down and try to work together for the benefit of the country. Still a divided country. Politics are still very contentious.

Q: First place, Ambassador Shlaudeman, how did he operate? Was he the ambassador the whole time you were there?

GODARD: Ambassador Shlaudeman was a brilliant diplomat and a brilliant analyst of political situations. He'd seen so much. He was very much an old school, go directly to the source, he went to the major players, he talked to them. Had contacts with the Sandinistas as well as with government politicians. He was very much all for my getting out and doing political reporting as well. He wanted to take advantage of the contacts that I had over the years. His commitment to the secretary had been for the short term. He didn't plan to stay that long in Nicaragua, but I think he was an excellent sort of bridge because he could talk like a Dutch uncle to Dona Violeta. I think they communicated well, and he also managed to do a good job with Antonio Lacayo, the son-in-law who was the sort of premier. Dona Violeta sort of gave him that role for running the government. The time I spent with Harry Shlaudeman I think was very instructive in learning my craft. He was one of these people who could take a yellow pad and write a cable. He never seemed to dictate particularly. He would write it out in complete sentences and complete paragraphs, all the lucid thoughts. I scratch out and go back when I'm drafting, but he was quite a piece of work.

Q: What was sort of our analysis of Violeta Chamorro and how she governed?

GODARD: As I said, she had no political experience prior to her husband's death. Of course we all knew she grew up in a prominent family and her husband, his whole life seemed to be politics. And she knew a lot about Nicaragua. She had a very good personal touch. She was the kind of woman, some politicians identify as father of their country, she was sort of the mother of their country. She really got around and met people. She was a very good campaigner as it turned out. A woman with no pretenses. She would entertain people and she would, here's the president of the republic and she was always checking to make sure that you had a drink, that you had enough to eat, this sort of thing. So she never lost the grace that she had cultivated as a spouse of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro. I thought a great deal of her. She was not a strong, involved political leader. She sort of

left the politics to her son-in-law and to others of her advisers, but it just wasn't I think her vocation. For the time, she was the right politician for Nicaragua, for that transition. For the first period after the Sandinistas.

Q: And after Somoza too.

GODARD: Yeah, had a long spell of Daniel Ortega.

Q: How did we see the political situation when you got there? The Sandinistas were still around.

GODARD: Oh very much. The Damocles sword sort of hanging over the whole thing was that the Sandinista army was still there and as well-trained and large as any other in Central America. I guess maybe the Guatemalans had a slightly larger force. But it was still by Central American standards a pretty impressive group. And the leadership, to a man, were officers who were raised and indoctrinated in the Sandinista ideology. And it was called, Arisito Sandinista. I don't know if it's been changed yet. At one point they were trying to change it. There wasn't a Nicaraguan army, it was the Sandinista army. So there was that factor. We, at that stage, I think things had changed now. We were very reluctant to enter into the normal kind of military to military relationship we usually cultivate in most of these countries.

Q: What sort of connections did you have to the Ortegas?

GODARD: I guess, like Ambassador Shlaudeman.. When he was there I really had no contact. I think he may have taken me with him once or twice to see one of the Ortegas. But I was the charg# for 18 months after Ambassador Shlaudeman left. Then I went to see them. They were important, but just one of the political parties there. I had contact with them particularly when we had visitors who would want to go. We had the congressmen or visiting members of the house or senate too, this was one of the things to do, visit the

opposition party. Go see the Cardinal, Cardinal Obando y Bravo, but I saw them, had a normal relationship.

Q: Did you feel that both the Sandinista army and also, I assume there was an equivalent to it, I don't know what you call it, peasant army or their followers, and also the contras. Were these groups hanging around waiting for shoes to drop?

GODARD: They all were. In some of these communities, in rural areas, they were. Swords ready, and violence could break out in some of the communities. But what we did to try and remedy that, we had a project. CIAD it was called, I can't remember what the initials stand for now, but they were working out of the vineyards where the contras and the demobilized Sandinista troops, because they had had a much larger army which had been decommissioned and they were civilian staffed. And this organization worked with both sides trying to make them happy farmers again, who could work side by side. Very difficult work. They were all there. Many of them still had their guns. There were sporadic outbreaks of violence between them, but nothing really serious. The one time when violence erupted was, I can't remember exactly what the issue was, but the Sandinista groups seized a good part of the legislative leadership and held them hostage. One of them was the president of the national assembly, Alfredo C#sar, who was a prominent politician whom I had known previously. I think I met him in Costa Rica beforehand. And negotiating that down, that was just about when I was ready to leave, and I had to stay on until that particular crisis was resolved before I could go on to my next assignment.

Q: Did you get involved in negotiations?

GODARD: We were promoting the negotiations. The primary actors were the minister of the presidency and the Sandinista party. In fact, they were talking to each other, and that was going on constantly, so there was no need for an intermediary role. But, because of the history of Nicaragua, the possibility of violence breaking out and being back in the

bad old days when they were shooting folks, it was thought necessary I stick around and I certainly agreed, until that was over.

Q: I heard that the Sandinistas, although they came in from out of the hills and they appeared to be sort of the working class taking over, many of the leaders quickly took over many of the villas, and started living the high life. Was there sort of a change there, how was that working out?

GODARD: They certainly did that, and they lived the high life. All of the commandantes did have big houses and cars and whatever. Those houses became a bilateral issue, because many of the people... those houses and other properties that had been confiscated without compensation by the government. There were claims against them by the former owners. Many of them had gone into exile in the United States, and many of them had become American citizens. Now, there's a disconnect there because they weren't American citizens when they had title of the property when they were confiscated. But anyway, they were American citizens, they were complaining to the American government about this government not returning their properties, so it became something we got involved in. Trying to work with the Nicaraguan government in restoring as many of these properties as possible to the former owners.

Q: I take it that we were putting in rather large sums of money to keep everybody quiet.

GODARD: The Sierra project, those projects were not that big. The other stuff, the development projects, there were some school projects, economic development projects of one kind or another, we had a big aid program there working with the chamber of commerce and stuff like this.

Q: Nicaragua is one of those places that is natural disaster prone. Did you have a major hurricane or a major earthquake while you were there?

GODARD: I don't think anybody escapes clean from there. There are just too many things going on. While I was there, there was a tsunami of all things. A tidal wave that swept into the southern coast and pretty well wiped out a village there. And then there was an eruption, which happens every once in a while, of Cero Negro which threw black ash over just hundreds of acres of farmland right around Leon, and we had all kinds of refugees who had to flee there. So that gave me an opportunity as acting chief of mission, a couple of times, to declare a national emergency and get some money to bring in and help out in those disasters. But fortunately I didn't have a big one. Those were both enough of a problem to deal with.

Q: How about the Indians? Was that an issue while you were there?

GODARD: Not really. The Mosquitoes, it's a very underdeveloped area that they're from. And the problems that the Sandinistas have with the Mosquitoes was forcing their incorporation into the rest of society and forcing them to abandon their traditional way of life. During Violeta Chamorro's day, they were sort of again free to follow their own designs. So it was not a major issue. I'm trying to remember if there were Mosquito, and that's the major indigenous group in Nicaragua, I'm trying to remember if there were members of parliament, but I don't recall any in the national setting.

Q: Were there any problems with El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, and that?

GODARD: There have been in the past, issues, there were some sort of flare-ups on the Gulf of Fonseca with Honduras. Little incidents of fishing boats encroaching and stuff like that. But nothing major. After I left, there were incidents. They have a contentious border with Costa Rica in the south, but during my period, border disputes were not a major issue.

Q: Drugs?

GODARD: No. Not particularly. I remember cases where we suspected Sandinista involvement in some drug trafficking, but that certainly wasn't a major route. There was one case as I recall.

Q: How about the Cubans? They had a major presence there. Had they settled in or were they soberly kicked out, or what happened?

GODARD: Still have a Cuban embassy there. The arms stopped coming in under Violeta Chamorro. There was no new weaponry arriving, but they had plenty from when the Soviets were stockpiling stuff there. In fact, that was the big issue working with the Sandinista army inventorying what they had, storing it safely so that it would not fall in the hands of the terrorist groups. And then, what they didn't need, ensuring that it was destroyed rather than disappearing into the black market. But the Cubans were there, they had exchanges going on. Cubans have always been very generous in educational grants, scholarships of one kind or another, and they picked up a lot of smart, young Nicaraguans, with college educations and that sort of thing.

Q: This is a little bit after, but is there any reflection of the demise of the Soviet Union which had been a great supporter of that?

GODARD: The Soviets were there while I was there, were very good contacts of mine.

Q: They were still Soviets, at least in the beginning, '97 I think they were still Soviets.

GODARD: They were there, and they had a lot of real estate that they had picked up during the Sandinista period. And there were huge properties, and there were claims against some of those properties as well. Part of this big issue with the confiscations. But it was sort of, and I've seen it in other countries, the Russian operation sort of divesting themselves of some of the stuff that they have, and supporting a mission in part by selling off some of the things they had accumulated. In Guyana for instance they kept several officers mission in Georgetown, Guyana, but they rented out the major portion of their

compound as a hotel there. And essentially things you saw in Nicaragua. Nothing in particular menacing. Just there, sweeping up and divesting themselves to a certain extent of all they had from before.

Q: At one time, the United States, Managua was almost the center of our foreign policy interest. Did you find a rapid falling-off of American interest there?

GODARD: Oh yeah. To a certain extent, not as much as you would expect because the personality of Violeta Chamorro found real resonance up in the States. She was somebody that Americans could really relate to, and Americans of influence. We had a good number of congressional delegations while I was there, and they were always enchanted by Dona Violeta. She really came across very well. Simple style, but very sincere. They maintained a level of interest, that was surprising really because it translated into the financing for a sizeable aid program to help ensure the success of the transition democracy.

Q: Did we have any military interest in the area?

GODARD: The fact that there was a military in Nicaragua that was controlled by an ideologically opposed group was kind of unique. Gradually we handed off to more normal military to military relationship with the army in Nicaragua. But beyond that, unless there's some threat there, or the real military concern was the Soviets and the Cubans using Nicaragua for their purposes, for teaching purposes, so that diminished our military interest. But we kept a close eye on the possibility of it becoming more important as a drug transit site. That didn't happen during the time that I was there. It was something that was going on, but it wasn't a major transit country.

Q: During the Somoza and then the Sandinista regimes, there was a lot of concern and involvement of churches including those sisters and brothers and others. What about church involvement in the country from outside of it when you were there?

GODARD: We talked about liberation theology a while back, and the presence of certain priests, especially Jesuits in the Sandinista movement. There was also a Maryknoll father as I recall, Padre d'Escoto was a Maryknoll father who was a foreign minister. By the time I got there, I don't remember church leaders being prominent in the FSLN itself. D'Escoto was still around, and he may have even still been on the director board, not on the directorate but a close advisor. I think that it pretty well diminished. The primary political figure on the religious side was a Cardinal, Cardinal Obando y Bravo who had been a steadfast anti-Somoza figure. He had been sort of the patron of the revolution in many ways, and then broke with the Sandinistas, then became very much an anti-Sandinista figure and somebody that the opposition to them rallied around in defending Catholic values. He was still there, and was second only to Dona Violeta, major figures there that all the folks that came to visit us in Nicaragua wanted to go see and talk to, get his views.

Q: By '93, what happened to you?

GODARD: I got another call, this time the man who was our ambassador to Argentina, James Cheek, who had been my boss in Nicaragua during my first tour. He invited me to come be his Deputy Chief of Mission in Buenos Aires, and I accepted that. But I couldn't get away from Nicaragua, I stayed on there a little longer than I had anticipated because of the problems that we had. While I was on leave, I actually got promoted to minister counselor which was helpful, then went on to beautiful Buenos Aires.

Q: Alright well we'll pick this up the next time in 1993 when you were off to be DCM in Buenos Aires and one of the things I'd like to talk about is, we talked before about when administrations change, did you sense any change in administrations when the Clinton group took over from George H. W. Bush and all, we'll talk about that, and then the whole thing of what you were up to.

Today is the seventh of January, 2005. Ron, were you back in the department during the change of administration?

GODARD: No, I think I must have been overseas when it actually happened. I had a friend, the man who called me to become his DCM in Argentina, James Cheek, was part of the transition team for the Clinton administration coming in. Jim was one of those people who were punished when the Reagan administration came in for having supposedly lost Nicaragua. Jim was sent off after a very distinguished time in Latin America, and having served during a very difficult time as our deputy assistant secretary covering Central America, this is when the Salvadoran insurrection or civil war, whatever you want to call it, was wrapping up. Jim actually spent a long time down there as the charg# and so forth. His papers had been processed I think, and he was called back after the transition to be on the transition team for the Latin American group, and then went out as ambassador to Argentina. That's when he called me, because it's one of those things where we talked years before about, if I ever get to be ambassador I want you to, Jim was my boss in Managua. We had a very close relationship and we kept up with each other over the years, and sure enough he wanted me as DCM. By that time, I had pretty good credentials. I had been DCM in Managua, had been in charg# for a good long time. So I accepted the job. I wasn't back in Washington for the transition, so I don't really know the atmospherics of it.

Q: You were in Argentina from '93 to when?

GODARD: I was there for four years. It's the longest I've ever been anywhere.

Q: So '93 to '97. Ok, the situation in Argentina in '93 when you got there.

GODARD: It was during the administration of president Carlos Menem, the Peronist politician, populist kind of politician with good credentials in the labor movement in particular. Who a lot of people thought was going to be a wild man, hailing back to some

of the more extreme policies of the Peronists in the past. But he turned out to be very interested in cultivating a close relationship with the United States. Also very interested in promoting the kind of private sector development he'd seen next door in Chile, what had happened there. But the Argentines wanted to do it in a democratic framework, whereas it had taken the Pinochet dictatorship to accomplish that kind of work in Chile. Menem was having a lot of success, all the time I was there, in attracting foreign investments. There was a series of big commercial delegations coming down, headed by governors in some cases. That's where I met Tommy Thompson for the first time, governor of Wisconsin. I met the governor of Nevada, and any number of politicians, members at the state level, and also Paul Cellucci, Governor of Massachusetts, led a group down there. Now our ambassador to Canada. And then a lot of members of Congress were coming down. Very interested in what the Argentines were accomplishing. It was when the third world accounts, the developing economies, were particularly popular for investment groups. Menem did a lot of privatizations, there were big corporations coming in, grabbing on to this. Unfortunately, at the same time, there were deep-seated problems with Argentina that were not addressed. They were still living much beyond their means. They were still subsidizing inefficient bureaucracies. Especially in the provinces outside the capital, not the central government necessarily. And an awful lot of corruption in the country that came back to haunt them when the bubble burst after I left. During the whole four years I was there, we had sort of a picture book relationship with the Argentines. The time during the Gulf War, Menem sent a frigate to participate. He was very interested in the security relationship, a mature relationship with the United States. Contributed troops for peacekeeping missions that we were particularly interested in seeing successful. Was very helpful to us in international organizations. We could always count on, when we went to the foreign ministry under his government, getting at least a fair hearing on our position in trying to generate their support. When you get the instruction and you trek over there and try to convince them to vote with you. Some cases we got an awful lot of third world countries anyway voting against us in international organizations, and even in many cases Europeans. But the Argentines were most helpful in most cases, and

the ambassador was quite popular personally in Argentina. He'd been a soccer fan for years, going back to when he was first touring London. He was from Arkansas. Soccer was nothing back in those days, but he developed a love for the sport, and had kept up with it in subsequent assignments like Uruguay and the other countries. So he joined the soccer club, one that was not one of the favorites of the elites, and it happened to win a national championship that year, so he was viewed as a kind of a good luck charm for the soccer team and he was always sought out for commentary on sports issues, stuff like this. He brought soccer into the residence, and it was quite an interesting time working with Jim. I think we accomplished a great deal back in those days. I was the sort of typical DCM, doing the inside running of the embassy. I also did a lot of reporting because of our relationship. Very often I would go with him to high level meetings, I'd be the one to interpret the meeting. Because of that, it was a very smooth transition when he left. I was charg# for a year after that. There was a gap where the administration was trying to put Jim Dobbins in the job as ambassador. Jim had run into some issues with I think Senator Helms over Haiti. He could not get confirmed, and that just went on and on and on, and so I was there. As a result, it turned out that I was there when Clinton himself and Mrs. Clinton were coming down for a state visit to Argentina. So I was due to leave, I was going to go on to become the deputy permanent representative to the OAS. I'd met Hattie Babbitt, the ambassador to the OAS while I was there. She was one of the people that visited us, and she was familiar with my work from when I was in Panama because they had the OAS general assembly there while I was there. The Clinton brand new deputy secretary, what was his name? Clifford Wharton I think? Came down as the head of our delegation and then Hattie Babbitt was the very new U.S. permanent representative to OAS. Governor Babbitt's wife. Was quite successful as ambassador. Anyway, she had invited me to become her new deputy, but I had to stay and take care of the visit.

I enjoyed the tour there. One of the more dramatic things that happened when I was there as charg# was President Carter came down with Rosalynn Carter and was really treated as a visiting hero. So many of the members of the government had suffered political

persecution during the military years, and it was because, some of them felt sincerely, and the vice president, Carlos Ruckauf, felt in particular like the Carter policies and the activism of folks like Tex Harris had saved his life. So President Carter was very, very well-received during his visit. It was interesting seeing the benefits of our human rights policy in very real, personal terms.

I got to do a little bit of traveling in Argentina. Huge, beautiful, very impressive, magnificent country, and so I got down to Antarctica. I didn't get to Antarctica itself but I got down to the Shetland Islands. Went on over to Tierra del Fuego and Chile. Some of the best memories of vacations that my wife had during our foreign service work while we were there. And also there were some in Chile as well.

Q: Going back to this '93 to '97 period. We must have been looking very closely at the economy. Something was almost endemic about the Argentine economy wasn't there? How were we seeing it at the time?

GODARD: The sicknesses that were there in the Argentine economy seemed to be being overcome. The inflow of capital was so tremendous that they could keep it moving. So many investors were putting their money, retirement funds up in the States were really interested in these developing economy funds, and Argentina was one of the real go-getters back in those days. So that's what kept driving it, and they never really had to come to terms with the problems that were always there. To a certain extent, with this kind of massive influx of capital things got worse, and so there was, after I left, a big crash. The convertibility policy in that kind of atmosphere, where American and other foreign investors were looking for a safe place to put their money, was very attractive. And it was a country where you could put your money in and get it out very easily. There was no problem in banking transactions of any kind, currency transactions. It was not everything, but major privatizations had occurred so the economy was phasing out of those huge state enterprises that the Peronist regime had built up for decades was dismantled for the most part. Public utility, collection of the garbage, and all the traditional stuff that were state

functions were being privatized, turned over to private companies. They were coming from all over the world to take up these functions. The Chileans were big for one thing. They had their retirement system getting a lot of capital for investments overseas, so there was a lot of excess capital from Chile coming in to Argentina. Spanish capital and an awful lot of American companies.

Q: Did we have any concerns that things were moving too, eventually corruption and all that?

GODARD: We were, but our analysts, I just don't think anybody, Argentina has been through so many boom and bust cycles, it's sort of like the last stock bubble. Nobody expects it to end sort of thing, and you find analysts always giving good reasons why it will continue growing. This economy is going to keep growing, this might be the endless wave. I wish I could say that during the time we were there that we could predict the fall of the economy. But we just weren't there in our analysis, and I'm no economist, of what we saw of how they were doing all the right things, the IMF (International Monetary Fund), they were their poster child, and all the good stuff that you expect. They were privatizing, turning the private sector loose. Lots of investment. People bought it obviously, in the investment community. It just looked real good. On top of that, they'd been outstandingly courageous in actually converting their currency to one-to-one parity with the dollar, and sticking to that. Pumping exchange into the market whenever the peso looked like it was getting inflated. We just didn't anticipate it. Maybe I left a little early, and others after me could see the red flags starting to come up.

The corruption, yes, I know we did spot that. It was unavoidable. There were just too many anecdotal sort of things. These things seldom went to court, but we were aware that a lot of money was changing hands.

Q: We had our Corrupt Practices Act. We strove to prevent American businesses from paying out bribes in order to get the proper concessions and all of that, abroad. Was this a problem or inhibitor or anything like that?

GODARD: There was only one case where there were accusations that there had been impropriety on the part of an American company. It's one of those things where we assiduously warned American companies when they came in, look, you can get yourself in real trouble in this place if you don't watch it. There was never anything proven even in that one case, and it did go to court, and there was a lot of probing into the various ins and outs of the case. So we were aware of that danger for American investors and tried to ensure that they played by the rules.

Q: Did you feel that other countries, the French, British, Germans, were they playing by the rules too or not?

GODARD: Some of them were, some of them weren't. The French were also notorious. Again, you don't have the black and white in the courts, but the anecdotal stories of how they in particular were not playing fair. American business people would come to us and feel like they were getting a raw deal, and other Europeans as well, where they sort of did it the Argentine way.

Q: Were the Argentines going to the United States, particularly as students? Was this the place they were getting higher education, or were they headed to Europe, or how does it work?

GODARD: We became I think during this period, the most popular destination for vacation. Argentines traditionally had gone to places, the well-to-do, to France or to Italy or places like that in Europe for their vacations. The U.S. became very popular for that purpose. The U.S. education also came to have a tremendous premium. Argentina was one of those countries that used to be the second language was always French. That changed I think,

during this period. English was certainly predominant. Although people forget that the English were a tremendous influence on Argentina.

Q: They had BA (Buenos Aires) at one time for a short time.

GODARD: That's right. The sports clubs all had sort of English roots. Much of the schooling was in the English tradition, the private schools in Argentina. English was certainly out there, but it was not the second language of the country until that time when we were there. And it had started a bit before.

Q: What about the legacy of the military government, in particular the last military government at the time of the Falkland Islands, and that flash Malvinas, I imagine you learned to say Malvinas while you were there. Was there much of a legacy of that?

GODARD: It was always sort of sifting through the coals of that period while we were there, and it intensified after I left. Menem had promulgated an amnesty, so from a legal standpoint that's being questioned. I think it's been overturned in some cases since. They had an excellent commander of the army who was a highly respected officer during the time I was there. He was not tainted by the human rights record of the military regime. And he was a very modern thinking military man who was very interested in working with us, with our military. While I was there, we made Argentina a, what do we call it, principal non-NATO ally of the United States. This has certain privileges, there are certain kinds of military contracts that Argentine firms can go for, and certain access to equipment and so forth associated with that. But during the time I was there, every once in a while there were some of the particularly notorious human rights offenders occasionally would surface, but with the amnesty they had been exonerated. So while I was there they didn't really come to trial. Didn't become the kind of issue that it became later.

Q: One particular navy commander, he was a guy who pushed people out of helicopters over the ocean wasn't he?

GODARD: There was a mechanical school where this, it was a lower level officer I'm thinking of, who was particularly notorious for I recall an incident of killing some nuns. This was one of the things that he allegedly did. He was around, and every once in a while the press, that was one thing during the time I was there, the free press was really very good about going after stuff like that. Trying to whip it up and getting peoples' attention to it again. Very free press, pretty good on investigative reporting. Good articles while I was there.

Q: Were we concerned about not giving the Argentines airplanes that had enough of a range to try again in the Falklands, because this was a big issue. The Falklands were just the extreme range at the end of the Falkland War.

GODARD: There was no effort to build up their strike capability. The budgets of the military had been cut back drastically, the size of the military had been cut back drastically. They'd been cleaned out pretty well, the officer corps had. Folks who had been particularly implicated with the military government. So you had a pretty well-neutralized military by the time I got there. There was a little episode I recall just a couple years before I got there. It was an attempted uprising against Menem. That was put down, there were trials for those people, the officers that were involved. Overall they managed it pretty well in terms of trying to move on. Of course, there was the issue of having a right-sized military for security purposes, but they were hypersensitive about being used as shock troops against civilians. They were very careful about that sort of thing. So it was the gendarmerie which is a national police force, they were the ones that had to take on those kind of problems. But this commander, I wish I could recall his name, was really quite outstanding. Did a marvelous job in the transition.

Q: Did we get involved at all in trying to help sort out the disappeared?

GODARD: All that sort of had happened before I got there. There were not U.S. government efforts after that for...

Q: Forensics and that sort of thing.

GODARD: No, I don't even remember any requests to provide that sort of thing. I think in Chile they would discover graves, and that would produce them to move more, but I don't remember that happening in Argentina. Coming up with new cases where they could then build a criminal case. I guess the Argentines disposed of the bodies over the water.

Q: How were relations between Brazil and Argentina?

GODARD: They were pretty warm. Part of this economic boom that was going on in Argentina was attributed to the Mercosur who were coming into its own, this regional economic trade group that they belonged to. It was not a customs union, but a customs...

Q: All about free trade?

GODARD: Yeah, a free trade association of the four countries of the southern cone: Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Brazil. And it had come into its own, and the trade between Argentina and Brazil was critical. There were always dustups between the two countries on various issues. Automobiles in particular, sensitive I think in the trade. Argentines were always thinking the Brazilians were getting the better of them one way or the other. But overall the relations were quite cordial, economically. There were still sort of regional rivals, that element was there. But I think they were growing out of that, and I think now the political collaboration, especially now because ideologically the two presidents are pretty much on the same wavelength too, very close political collaboration as well. During this period, also during the Menem period they settled a number of border issues with Chile, and they settled all of those. The last one in the south over the glacier, that was particularly difficult. But you should have heard, they would blow up how important it was, these reserves of water in the glacier. It was touch and go negotiating. But they finally settled that last one as well. So all of those problems were taken care of, so transborder economic development began to occur. As I mentioned, Chilean capital was coming in

along with other countries for investment in Argentina. Relations on all of its borders I think were very cordial and well-founded.

Q: Did you find people of the upper class looking at Chile and saying, boy they've really done the right thing economically and all. Is this sort of the example?

GODARD: Everybody wanted to achieve the same sort of progress as the Chileans did, but they didn't want to go through the cost of a dictatorship like Pinochet's. It was circulating that you couldn't have sustained economic growth in Latin America because it was so chaotic unless you imposed a strong authoritarian regime. It was the same sort of growth Menem was seeking. He managed democratically to do some of the same things that Pinochet accomplished in privatization and so forth, turning the economy around in terms of giving it a private sector motive for growth. But without the cost of human rights that the Chileans paid. So yeah, there were people who still batted that around, but I think Argentina was one of the first, maybe not the only one in Latin America, but one of the first to prove that you didn't have to have a dictatorship in order to have sustained economic growth. That said, although they busted.

Q: I would think that working in Argentina out of Buenos Aires, here you have this capital which is sort of everything. It's a hell of a big hinterland, and we don't have anything out there. I would think that as DCM, there would be concern that our political economic officers could be absorbed by the very hospitable Argentine upper class and all of that. How do you get out from under those, Mendoza or other places, talking to real people.

GODARD: We did do field trips. They were never adequate for having good political or economic coverage of a region, but they're not bad. Because of the good relationship we had we were well-received, and so whenever I arrived in a provincial capital I got to see the governor and I got to see the head of the radical party, I got to see the bishop, that was a factor in the local scene. So when I or my political officers, we tried to make sure that there was money for traveling in my mission, so that we got people out, because Mendoza

is a factor. It is a federal system. The governors are important. The president of this country, Menem, was a governor before he became president. Kirchner was a governor in Santa Cruz before he became president. Duhalde, I guess he was the mayor of the city of Buenos Aires, which was a big deal too. The other thing is we had regional people. People like our agricultural officer. There were important things happening in agriculture in Argentina that we had to really monitor. They were out in the fields a lot more, because that wasn't necessarily in Buenos Aires that you could cover. They were out looking at the corn crop or the soybean crop, what kind of meat exports would you expect, and that sort of thing. Things that were really of great interest to us economically. And there were others. The military attach#s, we recognized the importance of the different regional commands. They were traveling around the country. During the period I was there we very wisely had an attach# aircraft. Small aircraft, a four, five, six seater. You could actually get up to six people in that plane. And it was being used regularly. It was one way the ambassador would travel to the interior. It's so difficult to get around in Argentina by land. I made several trips that way, but they were less than satisfactory because you'd spend so much time on the road. My plane could drop in, but private commercial travel was prohibitively expensive in the country. We tried not to be captives of Buenos Aires. That said, what goes on in Buenos Aires is 90% of what's going on. So we did get around I think, in Argentina. But as I was saying, 90% of what goes on in the country is in Buenos Aires. That's the focal point. All of those provincial governors I'm talking about maintain very active offices in Buenos Aires and spend a lot of time in Buenos Aires themselves in order to conduct business, in order to protect the interest of their various provinces. We'd see them. They'd come into Buenos Aires, we could see them there and sort of keep up with local politics that way. I was mentioning these sort of bloated provincial bureaucracies which were one problem in the country. They were subsidized out of the national budget. You had these job riots whenever they were trying, periodically and it seemed around the holidays when these would happen. And so there were outbreaks of violence that had to be addressed and that's when we focused in on the provinces more because that was potentially destabilizing activity. It's when those were going on that I felt the most need for

better contacts in the provinces. Occasionally, it seemed like Christmas time, prison riots inevitably occurred. They were overcrowded like in most developing countries. Conditions were not great, although much better than most countries I've served in. But because they were all people who had not been brought to trial yet. I forget what the figures were, but something like 70% of those people had never been brought to trial or been sentenced. They were just in prison awaiting trial. And you can get impatient I guess.

Q: The political system, were we able to have good contacts or sort of find out what was happening?

GODARD: Oh yeah. No problem at all. The opposition to a certain extent was regrouping a lot because the traditional opposition to the Peronists was pretty well discredited. That's when they had hyperinflation. Just an incredible amount of pesos was necessary to equal a dollar. People lost their shirts even worse than this last go around when the middle class was almost wiped out. People were looking for something new, but that said, there was still a lot of radicals in the radical party, which is a social democratic party, in elected office. And it even controlled some of the provinces, they even had some governors. And we had good access to them. There were a lot of new parties, the opposition was organizing itself. There was one election while I was there where Menem won re-election and then they were getting ready for another election by the time I left. As I mentioned the mayor at that time when I left was de la R#a who became the radical party nominee for president and won the presidency after I left. But only served for a few months, he was forced to leave I think. But we had no problem getting around and having contacts with the opposition. Political section I think was quite active, particularly, as they traditionally are, in maintaining contacts with the opposition, and I did some of that myself.

Q: '93 to '97 period, this is when Clinton was going all out on NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement. How did this sit with Argentina looking at it? This must have been an issue.

GODARD: It was. Free trade was an important pillar of their foreign policy and their economic philosophy. Their feeling was that Mercosur at a regional level had a tremendous boost to the economy, and a NAFTA type agreement, free trade FTAA agreement would be an even greater boost to the Argentine economy. They were really intent on FTAA policy.

Q: FTAA, what does that mean?

GODARD: Free Trade Area of the Americas, that's creating the free trade areas from Canada on down to the tip of Argentina.

Q: Chile of course comes to mind because they were in now.

GODARD: All we'd done, we negotiated a bilateral free trade agreement with Chile because their economy and our economy are both among the most open in the world, and so we were compatible so it was very easy.

Q: Winters and summers.

GODARD: That's right, agricultural products, very compatible. But they were also associates of the Mercosur conglomeration. Things have changed now in the policies of the Argentines and they're re-examining the advantages, and Brazil in particular. I think in part it's a much bigger economy and has other interests, and is also very much an agricultural competitor of ours, and we have these agricultural subsidies.

Q: I don't know how it is now but certainly probably at the time you were there it was very much, we want to produce our own goods here. Very protective because they felt they were big enough to match computers, airplanes, what have you with any other country.

GODARD: It's quite amazing. I've never served in Brazil and I really haven't visited it to any extent, but while I was in Guyana I made a trip to the adjoining province which is really

a frontier province of Brazil. I went into supermarkets there, and just looked down at the shelf, and it's all full of Brazilian products. Everything manufactured in that supermarket was Brazilian origin. From wines to hot sauce. Everything was there. So when you look at a gigantic industrial center like Sao Paolo, you gotta understand that is a big, big economy. I think it's fourth or fifth in the world. So they've got different interests in their negotiations. And now, Brazil and Argentina are stepping back from their commitments toward negotiating an FTAA and talking about FTAA lite with fewer restrictions, and protecting some of those things that are currently protected in their economy. Or phasing it in over long period of time. We're still working on those negotiations. When I was there, Argentina was pretty much in lock step with us. We were working very closely together.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover? The Clinton visit, how did that go?

GODARD: It went marvelously well. Like every presidential visit, it was a humongous headache to work out the schedule, and the security. We closed down downtown Buenos Aires. The city we closed down. But it was a fairly extended visit. He spent two or three days in Buenos Aires, and then they went to San Carlos de Bariloche because one aspect of it was...

[Begin Tape 6, Side 1]

GODARD: The Clinton visit was months in planning. It was a visit with Mrs. Clinton coming along. There were really touchy things to work out. Guiding them through the Iranian bombing had happened on our watch. The Iranian bombing is the Jewish community center that was bombed by, nobody really knows yet. But the Iranians were supposedly involved, at least there's suspicion of that. But anyway, there was a lot of attention focused on this huge Jewish community there, which I had very good relations with while I was there. So the president wanted to meet with leaders of the Jewish community. Turned out there are Jewish leaders and then there are Jewish leaders. Who's going to meet with him? You have one meeting, sorting out the politics of the issues in that community

was a real headache, but we finally worked through that. Everybody, of course, wanted a highly publicized meeting with him. We were getting close to another presidential election. The governor of Buenos Aires, Eduardo Duhalde, had been the vice president and he had become governor, was looking toward distancing himself from Menem and setting himself up to run for president, and he did later on. He wanted a private meeting, but we weren't able to work that out and that caused a lot of heartburn. But we did have to have a ceremony with Fernando de la R#a who was the leading candidate for the radicals for the presidency, because it was traditional to hand over the keys to the visiting chief of state. That had been done by a number of other chief of states while I was there. So there had to be a public ceremony for them, but we couldn't do it anyway. Trying to balance all this in a limited amount of time was a real challenge. You also had to work with the particular style of Bill Clinton. He and his staff were very interested in having kind of a town meeting atmosphere as a television event. We were able to work that out and arrange it. The staff worked beautifully because it was such an important country for us, for economic and political reasons we had hordes of visitors, among them the vice president had come down with his wife earlier on. So that had been sort of a training ground for me as a DCM to put my staff through the paces of working on one of these things. And they were really up to it for the presidential visit. They put it all together.

One of the best things that we did was arranging for Hillary Clinton to speak to a collection of female social leaders of the country. Putting together who those were and who could be in the national theater, the Colon Theater where she gave her speech, was the perfect venue for that kind of event was another series of issues, but that turned out to be one of the high points. It went over very, very well. She had a particular speech targeted to female politicians and leaders, and women's rights in general, which went over just very, very well. It was a heck of a lot of work, and everything went well. We had them out to the embassy and they both spoke to the staff. Very gracious, took them out to a tango show, they had to do that, and that was nice. They enjoyed the tango show. And in San

Carlos de Bariloche which is a ski resort, they had fabulous setting where Governor Bill Richardson was along with them that time, was he at the UN?

Q: He was the secretary of energy.

GODARD: He was traveling with them. Also, I see this Congressman Dreier from California who has come up in the Republican hierarchy, he was traveling with them as well, and sat in on the important meetings as well. And then we went out to as I say San Carlos de Bariloche where he gave a speech on the environment and that worked out well. We had a wonderful backdrop of the snowcapped Andes. Picture postcard stuff, it really looked nice.

Q: Did congress pay much attention to what we were doing there?

GODARD: They certainly came down in droves, members of congress did, and were on behalf of constituents very interested in what was going on. Made the usual stops, and were also interested always in the status of the military and whether they were reverting to their bad old ways or still supporting a democratic regime. So we got a lot of them. CODELs, senators and guys from the House.

Q: How about navy ship visits. Were we running exercises with that? At one point obviously we had to cut them off, but I take it we were back in business.

GODARD: Oh yeah, we were back in business big time, and we had some ship visits while I was there. They in turn had ship visits up in the U.S.

Q: I didn't know if it was low time but did they make any contribution, or did we ask, regarding Bosnia peacekeeping?

GODARD: I recall they did. Was this the period? I would have had to go in and talk to them about it. I remember Argentina is very much like the United States in terms of being a nation of immigrants, and so they had soldiers who were Croatian and Slovene speakers,

and several Croatian speakers, so they had some language capabilities too to contribute. So they did contribute to that.

Q: After this, I won't say idyllic but damn close to it, assignment..

GODARD: It really was, it was a very rewarding assignment and ended on a high note because of the Clinton visit. I left right after that.

Q: Well then '97, what?

GODARD: In '97 I was, as I mentioned Hattie Babbitt had invited me to become her deputy permanent representative at the Organization of American States (OAS). Of course, that was going to be a short-lived relationship because coming on board, I served with her for a while and then she left, and then there was another OAS representative who was named Victor Marrero, a man from New York who's now a judge in New York. So I had three good years as a deputy permanent rep in the OAS. I'd never done multilateral diplomacy before for any sustained period of time. I'd been up to the UN a couple of times for consultations during the general assembly, but it was a whole new ball game. Learning new skills, and to a certain extent being a political officer again, because it's a lot of schmoozing, talking to people, consulting, and trying to move things in the right direction.

Q: How did you find the OAS as an instrument for dealing with intercontinental affairs?

GODARD: Well, imperfect and evolving I guess is the way I would categorize it. It was getting more relevant. In the past, the OAS was ignored and assiduously ignored with disdain in some cases. But it was becoming more and more relevant. If it hadn't existed we would have had to invent it I'm sure, as our interests became more and more connected. Just as we were entering into the phase where we were looking toward economic integration, there was a need for some sort of political organization which is the OAS at a regional level. So we were going for economic integration through the FTAA negotiations and, concurrently, there's been strengthening of our ties within the OAS for

coordination on things like promotion of human rights, promotion of democracy. It was possible about the time I came on board. The first time I had gone or had any association with the OAS was when the OAS general assembly was held in Nicaragua while I was the charg#. It was held in Nicaragua to underline the importance of the transition to democracy under Violeta Chamorro from the Sandinista dictatorship which was many things, but there's no question that it was not a democratic regime. It was an authoritarian leftist government, and they had a democratic election and lo and behold this woman who was in the opposition won. And the OAS general assembly meeting there was in part to celebrate that return to democracy. And that was happening all over the hemisphere. Democratic governments. All these military governments just like in Argentina and Chile had been superceded, so we were like-minded on democracy and human rights issues. And so I came to the OAS at a time when we could collaborate, and on democracy issues you would find suddenly there were people that were even a little ahead of you. The Chileans sometimes were charging on ahead because of their particular history in coming back to democratic government. So it reached a stage where it was more relevant. Still frustrating, and multilateral diplomacy is very, very difficult. It takes a lot of work to stay in touch with the views of 33 different delegations. It takes a lot of work because you're dealing with all kinds of issues. Those social, economic, and political issues. So getting a U.S. government position sometimes is the most frustrating thing. And I've been in OAS meetings where I've had experts seated behind me, not being a spokesman for the delegation, and they're fighting back there, different agencies. They're practically slugging it out over what our position would be on whatever's on the table at that particular time. It usually doesn't get that bad. Usually slug it out at an interagency meeting or something and then you give instruction that's a little more neat and orderly. But I found that I kind of enjoyed that effervescence of policy making. And what you achieve were pieces of paper normally. The OAS doesn't have a lot of resources to work with, but pieces of paper that were important. We moved forward for instance, creation of a new inter-American commission to deal with terrorism, a terrorism convention. That became very important after September 11th as a coordinating mechanism in the hemisphere.

Q: Had this organization been created prior to this?

GODARD: It had been created prior. I guess I was the second deputy head of the delegation that really launched it down in Miami at a conference. We had somebody from S/CT I think, the counter-terrorism office who headed up the delegation, and I was the second for that. So we got that underway while I was there. There were steps toward supporting the Fujimori collapse when he was trying to create a more authoritarian regime in Peru. That was debated in the OAS. The man who became the democratic president of Peru, Alejandro Toledo, was up at our general assembly talking to us. We came out with a resolution and an effort to send a team down to Peru, and began the process that eventually resulted in Fujimori's leaving office and new elections that resulted in Toledo being elected. There were a lot of things like that that came up and it's surprising really when the crunch was in, when something like democracy in Peru was at stake, how the organization could come together and do the right thing, do something helpful at any rate.

We also created new mechanisms for funding conflict resolution. That was helpful for the Guatemalans and the Belizeans finally come to some, I don't know if they're completely settled yet, but they're close, in the border disputes between Belize and Guatemala. And the problems that Nicaragua and Costa Rica had had, and Honduras and Nicaragua had had, had been pushed in the right direction by the OAS. So it's a useful forum, and it's becoming even more important. If we do succeed, and I think we will eventually, in forming this Free Trade Area of the Americas, bringing all 34 countries together, then there will be even more need because it's inevitable. You see what's happening in the EU (European Union). Political collaboration comes to mean economic integration and you have to coordinate your position, and we've got the OAS there to serve as the vehicle for doing that.

Q: Drugs?

GODARD: When I arrived at the OAS, we already had operating what's called CICAD which is the Inter-American commission against drug abuse. We put a lot of money into CICAD, and other countries do as well. It is a very useful mechanism for channeling multilateral assistance to countries trying to diagnose what they have to do to combat the drug problem. Helping them with assessing how big a problem they have. Just a good vehicle for providing technical assistance to countries in combating the drug trafficking problem, and drug abuse problem in the hemisphere. So that is being addressed. There is also technical assistance in the social area that the OAS provides. They don't have many resources. It's a small and well-thought of effort that gets out a lot of scholarships for the developing countries, especially the poor ones. It does some good I think.

Q: It seems to me that this goes back quite a few years, but you have for example the Nicaraguan representative to the OAS when Somoza was in, and others who had just been in the United States forever and ever. In a way they didn't really represent their country. They were sort of almost Washingtonians rather than really representative. But at this time, did you find this a lively crew that could kind of deliver?

GODARD: It was a mixed bag. The guy you're talking about is Guillermo Sevilla Sacasa who was Anastasio Somoza's brother-in-law who was up here until shortly after World War II and this Anastasio Somoza senior, the first Somoza dictator had named him the son-in-law to the position. He stayed on for something like 50 years. He was indeed not particularly representative of the Nicaraguan people. A very small, elite bandway there. But there were others, talented people. The OAS had a reputation for a long time of being a place where politicians were sent into exile to a cozy little sinecure to keep them busy for a while. And there was still perhaps some of that. I remember while I was there, the president of Brazil, President Franco was actually named as the OAS representative. Now he's a serious politician and mostly whenever he came in to make a statement there was a lot of press there. It was all being played back to Brazil very heavily. He went on I think to become governor again in one of the big states in Brazil. And a lot of these

people who have rotated through there have gone on to have very important positions in their governments back home. But you still get folks that are obviously only because of their family connections or whatever, they're put in these jobs not for any particular merit. But it's much less than it was in the past. I found on the whole in the OAS they were pretty competent people. Trying to do their jobs, trying to keep the foreign ministries informed, trying the best they could to execute whatever their government policies were. But sometimes the governments change very rapidly and then the officials don't change that quick, and then trying to be in sync is tough. Often in the OAS what you find is that you have a new issue come up and there's no consultation going on back home, and so by the seat of the pants the diplomat is guiding the debate. It has its flaws, but overall it's getting better I think, and I think it's an indispensable forum.

Q: How did you work out with your relations with that major foreign power located here in Washington, ARA?

GODARD: Well that's interesting. There's always, what seems to have been in the past, a natural tension between the assistant secretary of the Western Hemisphere Affairs Bureau and the OAS ambassador. And sometimes, I can remember incidents in the past where they just weren't speaking to each other, because inevitably, unless you have a brotherly relationship where you're talking to each other all the time and coordinating, you're going to step on each other's toes. Right now, I must say the relationship is as good as I've ever seen. The current ambassador and the current assistant secretary seem to be talking to each other frequently. It's unique in that our current assistant secretary had been ambassador to the OAS previously to taking this position, and the current ambassador to the OAS has been in my position, has been a deputy permanent representative, and indeed the current assistant secretary had actually worked over at the OAS for a while before he went on.

Q: During your time, '97 to when?

GODARD: From '97 to 2000. During that time I had three ambassadors. I had Hattie Babbitt, I really didn't see although I had heard that the relationship is not that great between the assistant secretary and her. Victor Marrero, he was pretty politically astute and he accomplished things. I think he worked well with the assistant secretary of that time. We had these parallel processes that had developed. We had the OAS which was evolving, and then we had the Summit of the Americas process. When the Summit of the Americas process started, the architects of that were insistent that the OAS not get involved, because talk about an assistant secretary and an OAS ambassador, they were bound to infringe on each others' territories. Because the Summit of the Americas process treats a whole range of issues. It's not just trade negotiations. It's social issues, telecommunications, it's natural disaster coordination, all kinds of things that the OAS also does. So gradually, the assistant secretary had held on to the coordination of the Summit of the Americas process, when that started back in '94 and then the OAS within that organization had developed a summit's staffing capability. Eventually Victor was able to have the assistant secretary give him that responsibility. So it resides now where it should be, has since his day. He's also the coordinator for the Summit of the Americas process. Which enhances his authority as a bureaucratic player I think, because there's a lot of stuff going on inter-governmentally on moving those issues forward on regional cooperation in a variety of areas. It took away a lot of the potential for conflict between those two personalities. So I think under Ambassador Marrero's leadership there were no problems to speak of.

And for a short time I was the deputy to Luis... a politician from Miami who was our ambassador to the OAS. I can't remember his name right now. He was pretty good too at staying in touch with the assistant secretary. It's not something that the assistant secretary wants to do. I think the OAS is viewed by WHA in general as kind of a messy, multilateral morass that they don't want to get stuck with that sort of thing. So it's not something they want to do. It's to make sure that when they are dealing with things that all of a sudden ARA or WHA is interested in, preserving democracy in Peru, and doing something about

that requires a multilateral instrument like the OAS, and then you find the two come together and they form a team and we worked very closely. Haiti is another area now with a lot of integrated effort by WHA and the US OAS group. There just has to be to make it work.

Q: You left there in 2000. What happened?

GODARD: I was nominated as ambassador to Guyana and served there for two and a half years.

Q: What was the situation in Guyana in 2000 when you got there?

GODARD: Guyana was just about to have an election. Elections within that country are unfortunately incredibly divisive. The election in 2001 was no exception. I got there at the end of the year, or at the beginning of 2001. The country is divided racially between Afro Guyanese and Indo Guyanese. Guyanese who were brought in from India as indentured servants originally and of course the afro-Guyanese were brought in as slaves. They all live right along the coast, 90% of the population is along the narrow band along the Atlantic coast of Guyana. And these political parties ferociously contest national elections. The numbers are such that if it's an honest election, inevitably the Indo Guyanese party is going to win because they constitute about 55, some would say 60%, of the population. Because the parties have managed to narrow down their appeal to just those racial groups. They don't have a broader electorate to appeal to, despite the best efforts of some politicians in the country to broaden their appeal. So these elections are always contested after the results are in, there are claims of fraud and there is always violence associated with it. When I got there I was trying to avoid repetition of the old pattern. I was working regularly with an international groufriends of Guyana who were investing in the election. Through AID we had put a lot of money into getting the computer systems, the electoral database up to date so they could use that for counting the votes and ensuring that the

voter lists were honest. We also worked with the EU which had a program of assistance for the election.

Q: Was it the OSCE or...?

GODARD: The EU itself. They had a representative there with an aid mission, assistance mission. And we had also the UK, former colonial power, and the Canadians. Canadians always have an interest in the Caribbean, but particularly in Guyana because there are so many Guyanese-origin immigrants in Toronto in particular, all over Canada, but Toronto especially. So those were essentially the ones, but we also had PAHO (Pan American Health Organization) and other international organizations participating. We would meet on a weekly basis coordinating our activities and we worked with the electoral tribunal very closely. They had a very highly respected civil servant, he had been the commander of their armed forces. He was retired and had been brought back as head of the electoral tribunal. He was respected by both sides. So we had a good shot to having a peaceful and fair election. But, inevitably there were issues, and again there was no question about who won the election. The count was imperfect, but we had observers from the U.S. from the Carter Center, from the OAS. The EU had observers, the UK had observers. We had all kinds of observers. We all agreed who had won the election. Different reports were done on the electoral proceedings. The Carter Center came down, in fact President Carter. I met up with him again, had him over to the house again and all of us agreed who won the election. It was the Indo Guyanese party. And there was demonstration and rioting, burning of buildings by the Afro Guyanese, and that finally sort of dampened down. But during the whole time I was there, there was this aggravating political issue. There's a minority sector in their national assembly from the opposition. They would frequently walk out to try to discredit the legislative power doing stuff they have to do. What they were after I think was shared power, but what they really wanted was power. The problem is the Afro Guyanese party had been in power for about 35 years previously to the first honest election held in 1992 I think. So anyway, politics dominated from the time I got there until the time I left. Another issue that took up a lot of my time there was working with

the problem of HIV/AIDS. Guyana is second only to Haiti I think in the incidence, in the Caribbean, of HIV/AIDS.

Q: Where was that coming from, was that a reflection of Africa?

GODARD: No, there are different theories as to the origin of it. The Guyanese have been exporters of population for some years, especially since the end of the colonial period. Very educated people. So there's a lot of contact with particularly North America, but also the UK, people back and forth. Not like in the old days. They don't just close the door on the old country, they keep their ties. So there's a lot of travel back and forth. So there's that. And in the Caribbean in general I think HIV/AIDS is a problem. I think it more than likely came from North America, those contacts with North America. But it's because of the health conditions. The country is second, some people say Honduras is poorer, but probably second to Haiti in poverty. So the standard of living is pretty desperate, and disease is an issue. When we got there, there was a lot of denial in the society, in not wanting to come to terms with the issue. We had a very good program which I got involved with personally, and did a lot of personal diplomacy in working with speeches and doing walks with them and so forth. The AID coalition of about 10 NGOs, they were mostly young people's groups, and they were attacking the problem from different angles, but a lot of it was education in schools, that they were conducting. So that was a big issue.

It was also a country where crime, like in all the Caribbean, was becoming more serious and the police were a serious problem there. Their corruption. We pinged them repeatedly on torture by the police. Killing people rather than arresting them is what it amounts to. There were many instances where with proper police procedures you could have brought the guy to justice and they wind up instead opening fire and killing them. So there were those issues. We didn't work with the police in particular, but the UK did, and we supported them in their efforts. Our program was primarily with the army in the security field. We did the army and they did the police sort of thing. We split it up, and it worked fairly well as far

as a mechanism for assistance, but we had a long way to go in strengthening the police organization. The army is in pretty good shape.

Q: Was there a concern about Cuban influence? One time there was.

GODARD: It's still there. The Cubans have a good-sized mission there, and they also have a number of scholarships that they offer to Guyanese students every year. They have there something in the neighborhood of 50 medical personnel, nurses, physicians and technical people. We don't offer to scholarships so I didn't have anything to contend with. The president increased by about 50% the number of scholarships available to Guyanese students in Cuba. On Cuban issues, we couldn't count on the Guyanese vote in international organizations; there was a problem there. But the Cuban threat of the past, using Guyana as perhaps a springboard for influence in other countries, that really wasn't an issue.

Q: What about the Venezuela border?

GODARD: Well Venezuela claims about three fifths of the border, three fifths of the territory of Guyana. And this goes back a long way. There was a war during the Cleveland administration which supposedly settled the border between Guyana and Venezuela. It has subsequently been repudiated by the Venezuelans, and they reiterated their claim to this other three fifths of Guyanese territory. It was always there, and the Guyanese were always looking over their border at Venezuela which is their big neighbor. Of course you've got Brazil toward the south, but no border disputes with them. They were particularly suspicious of this new government that had taken office in Venezuela not that long before I got there, Hugo Chavez's government. In rewriting the constitution, he reiterated that claim to Guyanese territory. But it was managed fairly well. I always thought it could be settled, but maybe not. All they can do is, it's a political, old, old issue for Venezuela. It would be very difficult for them internally to just settle it. But it factored in the development in Guyana, when there were rumblings about it, and maybe they weren't too serious. An

article would appear in the press or something. It acted as a disincentive for investment in that particular part of Guyana, particularly with petroleum resources.

Q: How'd you find living there?

GODARD: It's a tough country. Of course, I as ambassador had a brand new residence that my predecessor had dedicated a good deal of his time and effort to getting built. It was a big spacious place. It wasn't quite finished when I arrived, but we moved in several weeks after our arrival. It was built by a local contractor to our specifications. We don't own the building, but it was built as an ambassador's residence. As I say, my predecessor worked on the plans, and so it had just the right kind of space for entertaining. It had good grounds for covering things like the fourth of July reception, and then opening it up for the fourth of July picnic whenever you have the American community which is quite large in Guyana. So it was ideal space wise. It also had a swimming pool so the community.. there weren't many recreational opportunities there, so we had a nice pool which everybody in the embassy community had access to, and it had tennis courts. We don't have any private clubs in Guyana, so they could have those sports facilities available. It was designed with central air conditioning which is not a thing you do in Guyana normally. Unfortunately they didn't insulate the pipes sufficiently so shortly after we moved in the ceiling started collapsing from the distillation on the pipes. And the plumbing in general was really a wreck. My wife nearly went out of her mind. Just before our first fourth of July reception, the evening before there were huge clumps of plaster all over the living room where we were supposed to be receiving the president and the foreign minister into the house, and everybody else, the politico-economic elite of the country. We got it all patched back together, but it was a real headache. At least the first year I was there it was a real problem. But comfortable. Having workmen around all the time, comfortable residence. A very nice embassy interestingly enough.

[Begin Tape 6, Side 2]

GODARD: It had better hospital facilities. Even for tooth extraction. We'd take people out and send them up to the States. Malaria was a problem, Dengue Fever is something they also worried about. And just general infections from the water. You had to watch the water. It was a small town, easy to get around along that band of the coast. As I mentioned earlier, not many recreational possibilities, but one of the great recreational opportunities was if you took a little time and went into the interior of Guyana, you go into these pristine untouched rainforests that are just spectacular. It's not easy to do, but there's a number of resorts along some of the rivers. You can get to those by river. If you're going overland, there are no roads to speak of. There is one chancy road in the rainy season. There was a lot of work to try to improve it while I was serving there. A road between the coast and Brazil. The idea being that there are markets that are in Brazil that are potentially very important for Guyana. And cities like Manaos which are now a million people offer quite a source of consumers if they had better transportation. But any rate, those natural beauties were something that you can't match in any other country. The Kaieteur Falls is just a spectacular place. It's in the state park there. My wife made several trips, she visited places where the wildlife is just unimaginable. Having giant river otters come right up into the house, that sort of thing. Giant anteaters, monkeys all over the place. Parrots and macaws. Just incredibly biodiverse system.

Q: I take it Jonestown was a distant, nasty memory?

GODARD: One of the first things I did when I got there as ambassador was visit the site, because I wanted to be able to tell people that I'd been there and seen what was there. It's an archaeological site. There's been no effort, nobody wants to remember Jonestown, so there's no memorial there, there's no effort at all to preserve the place. Immediately after everyone was killed, they committed suicide, whatever happened, the ones that survived also set fire to all the buildings, and then afterwards there were these rumors, stories, apocryphal tales, whatever about Jim Jones' treasure which was buried out there somewhere. All this money that's supposedly out there. So the area has been

tremendously excavated. You cannot imagine. It's really rocky and rough. But it's all overgrown with jungle. I walked around just trying to figure out, where was the main house. I found sort of what must have been part of megaphone. I think Jim Jones had a sound system where he could speak to everyone in the community at the same time. I found part of what looked like a telegraph machine of some kind that had come apart. Then there was a lot of pieces of motors, heavy machinery, and things like that. If you pull the jungle back, clear the ground a little bit, you can find little articles like that, but nothing else.

Q: You didn't have people from San Francisco or something coming to memorialize?

GODARD: No, nothing like that. It's extraordinary how little, there are stories now about it, among the Guyanese, but when it was going on, when it was created out there, people didn't know it was there.

Q: I've interviewed guy who was a DCM there who was actually wounded. This was way out there.

GODARD: It's very near the Venezuelan border, and very isolated. We went in by plane this time, and we had a heck of a time finding somebody to guide us to where it was. There was one Amerindian woman that we finally found who remembered it as a child and she, after a couple of missteps, we went down the wrong road a couple times, we finally found it and walked around, saw the stuff that I was telling you about.

Q: You were there when the twin towers of New York were attacked, 9/11. Did that have any impact on you at all?

GODARD: Very definitely. Everybody. It was a horrifying event to have been back here in the States, but to be overseas where you feel like you're so vulnerable, and for the American citizens living there in particular, they really felt like orphans. That's when being an American really comes home to you, when the country is under attack like that, and you have no earthly idea what's next. So the American community itself felt just swept

with this fear of what was going on. Guyana is a country with a Muslim minority, a large one, about 10% of the population. There are mosques all over the country. At least 12, some would say 15, 20%. So there were all kinds of rumors. The first thing I did was call them all together and this is where that big house came in very handy. Got everybody into it, the American community, a lot of missionaries and missionary families in particular. Gathered them there and commiserated with them and told them what I knew at least about the situation. We were pretty much, during those first days, leaving it pretty much to the missions to manage the situation because there was a heck of a lot of stuff up in Washington. We'd even evacuated the building at one point. So I did what I could to reassure the American citizens there, the American staff. There was a tremendous outpouring of sympathy from the Guyanese. It's interesting, Guyana I think I mentioned earlier has been the source of all kinds of out migration. One of the biggest concentrations of expat Guyanese is in New York, in Brooklyn and Queens. That community accounted, per capita basis, probably Guyana was the country that lost the most citizens, because there were about I think 16 Guyanese who were accounted for. It's a country of under a million people. So there was one man who came in very shortly after it happened and had lost his wife in the 9/11 events. President Jagdeo called me immediately upon hearing about it, offered me all kinds of support, condolences, increased security at the embassy. And then there began a bunch of commemorative, mourning events. There were Muslim groups who invited me to come and speak, or Hindu groups. The country is divided between Hindus, Muslims and Christians. About 50% Christian. But I did an ecumenical ceremony at the cathedral where we had all religions including the Bahais represented. I spoke to that gathering. Really very touching and very reassuring too. Shortly after the attack, leaders of the Muslim community came to me and assured me of their goodwill and sympathy, and condemnation of that kind of approach. So that was comforting too. So we went on from there. A year later, we had a commemorative ceremony at the embassy that the President himself came, and a good deal of his cabinet, members of the opposition. It was a very tough period, it was difficult working through it. After that, I spent a lot of time in outreach to the Muslim community, to make sure that we were in touch with each

other, that I was explaining our policy in clear terms to them and developing my personal relationships with them.

Q: During this period, the second Bush administration's foreign policy was under a lot of criticism in the United States and certainly in Europe and all, about going unilaterally in various things including attacking Iraq. Did you find the criticism at all was reflected where you were, and did this make things difficult?

GODARD: Oh yeah, that was the big issue in the public domain down there. The press very much in line with the sort of thing you were hearing in Europe about unilateralism by the United States. The Guyanese were critical of our position on Iraq. There was an opportunity, however. The press was open to our getting our message across and that's when I started an awful lot of public diplomacy. Appearances on television. The UK ambassador there and I did a lot of joint appearances. Both the first ambassador I worked with and then his successor. There was a lot of sentiment for the UK still, favorable sentiment in Guyana, but still a member of the commonwealth. So that was helpful. And my letters to the editor were being published. Especially on television we got an opportunity to get our case before the Guyanese. I did as I say appearances particularly on programs that were dedicated to Muslim audiences. I tried to, there are a number of those in Guyana. It gave us an opportunity to have our say, and in some cases debate what was going on.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover?

GODARD: On Guyana? Well, it was a difficult assignment. The one thing that happened at the end, I mentioned the crime. But it reached a particularly acute stage toward the end where there were kidnappings of people, and at one point there was a kidnapping of one of my personnel. The RSO was nabbed and was held for 12 hours I guess before he was finally released. Just a criminal gang. They've developed on the outskirts of Georgetown, the capital, a kind of refuge for a criminal group that was led by some gentlemen who

had escaped from prison. They had nothing to lose, multiple crimes, murder in most cases. And they started kidnapping people for profit. This is something that had started in Trinidad and seems to have drifted over to Guyana. Things sort of happened in the Caribbean. Fortunately it turned out well and our RSO was released unharmed. But after that, because I couldn't be assured my people were safe, I had to bring up the pressure on the government to do something about this security issue because otherwise I would have to close the mission. That got their attention, and they finally did go in and wipe out these guys that were in this little village on the outskirts of town. For a while at least, it brought the crime problem down.

Q: How did your staff and family feel about this?

GODARD: Oh, well they were terrorized of course. Everybody was upset. That was another thing, just working with my staff through the issues. You can imagine the sense of insecurity that they have. Is my family safe here now? We were particularly under threat because the police were not doing their job. They reached that stage in deterioration of their capabilities, and these guys were just out of control. So what I did was keep the pressure on the government and eventually they did do what they had to do.

Q: Then in 2003 what happened?

GODARD: 2003 I was all ready to retire from the Foreign Service, and was assigned instead as a Diplomat-in-Residence to the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) where I spent a year doing recruiting for the Department of State. I felt like I had something to give back to the Foreign Service, and I very much enjoyed working with young people. The university also gave me an opportunity to teach a seminar on international affairs, an honors seminar. And I really liked that. I got to write the syllabus and to pull together a kind of a different approach whereby we brought diplomats resident in Chicago. It has one of the largest consular corps in the United States. Very smart people there. So we had in somebody from the Mexican consulate.

Q: Huge population there.

GODARD: Of Mexicans? Oh yeah, enormous. So we brought in the Mexican consul to talk about migration issues and the issues associated with illegal residents in the country. The problem of the execution of Mexicans who were not given consular access and things like that. And then we had the French consul come in and talk to us about U.S. relations with the EU which were very troubled at that particular time because of Iraq. The campus of UIC is a multi-ethnic campus. As you can imagine, Chicago is a magnet for immigrant groups from many countries, many since its inception. Particularly now, with the new immigrant groups, the campus of UIC is probably 60-70% minority. An awful lot of people whose first language was not English. I think it was running up to 50%. So in my class I had Muslim women who had scarves who were grilling this French diplomat on their policy on prohibiting these head coverings in France. Made for an interesting session. I had somebody from the Canadian consulate who talked about NAFTA and trade issues, Canadian relations with the United States in general. Then I had a fascinating session where we had the Ukrainian consul who was talking in particular about the Ukrainian immigrant groups there in Chicago. It was a huge community, some of the most interesting churches in the Chicago area were the Ukrainian churches. But it's doubly interesting because UIC has one of the largest medical campuses in the country, and it has a package of projects with the Ukraine to remedy the medical consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. So I had him, and then the professor who was also coordinating those projects in the Ukraine, in to talk to the students. That was where we talked about international health issues. So it made for an interesting seminar. And then I of course got to talk, the title was “International Affairs: A Diplomatic Perspective.” And so we were getting the views of different diplomats from various countries and of course I had an opportunity to talk about the evolution of the U.S. Foreign Service and our diplomacy, and my own personal experiences in my various walks.

Q: As of today, our country is deeply divided, and one of the things is on the foreign policy. Much of the academic community has been opposed to the Bush policy. As sort of the representative in a major university, did you feel it thus?

GODARD: Oh sure. But another thing I found was there was respect for my views. And I found that particularly true from this new generation of students. The new generation is coming along. They were willing to give me an opportunity to express my views as well as listening to theirs. So I found them useful to work with. I also had opportunities to do some lecturing on particularly Latin American affairs because that had been my expertise. So I talked a lot about the evolution of our human rights policy. Not only in Chicago, because my parish was all over the Midwest, so I got to travel around a lot. Ohio State University, Michigan University, Minnesota University. I got around. And so I was grilled by a lot of people and got the hostile questions, but that's the sort of thing I've been used to handling throughout my career and I didn't find it difficult. And I did not find people inordinately unkind.

Q: It wasn't like Vietnam where...

GODARD: Not where people would try to disrupt the meeting or anything like that. You could speak and get your point of view across, and stand by for hearing the other guy's views as well.

Q: After that, that brings us up to date?

GODARD: That's correct.

Q: Did you retire then?

GODARD: I went to the retirement course and then I did the job search and shortly after I retired September the 28th, 2004 I accepted an offer to work as a WAE employee. I was named by the Secretary as his special coordinator for the 2005 general assembly

of the Organization of American States. Since I had done in one capacity or another five OAS general assemblies in my career and had had those three years in the OAS, and I knew both the assistant secretary and the ambassador to the OAS quite well, the two of them got together and decided I was probably the right person to do this. It's a little bit complex in terms of doing this. It's the first time in 30 years the United States has hosted the general assembly. It's going to be in Fort Lauderdale. There are any number of agencies that are going to be involved in this. It's very likely the president will speak at the general assembly. That's the custom, the head of state of the host country to speak. It's also, so we got the White House and Secret Service and we've also got all of these local authorities, Broward County, Fort Lauderdale, and the state of Florida who have got roles to play down there. Then we got the office of international conferences, we got protocol in our own building, we got the diplomatic security people in a big way. And then you got the OAS staff who are the ones supposedly going to organize all of this to work with. There really is I must say a need for coordination of some kind, and I've been given authorization to pull together a staff of about eight people. And they're giving us office space for that. And it's developing into a very interesting project. I'm enjoying it.

Q: Well I wish you luck on that.

GODARD: Thank you so much.

End of interview